



St Mary's News

Thank you so much to everyone who came and supported 'Share a Sound.' The children were amazing at showing the grownups how we learn our phonics and demonstrated a fabulous insight to how reading is taught at St. Mary's. Thank you for your continued support, together your children will be 'big readers tomorrow.'





Year 6 have had a fantastic afternoon with Jess from [Sandersons Dance Education](#). This is our second week of street dance and they are busting moves like strictly professionals.



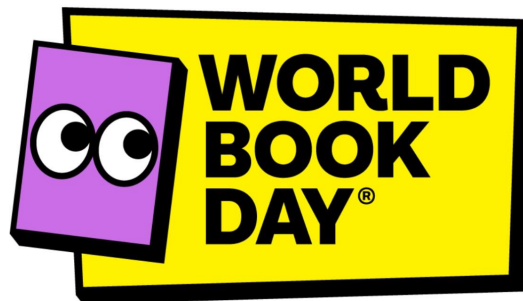


Father David came in on Friday morning to celebrate a Lenten mass with us all. We thought about what we could do during Lent whether it be fasting, helping others or giving to charity.





World Book Day 





A big shout out to one of our Year 6 pupils. Patsy won first place in competition across several local schools to design a training top for Burnley Women's first team training top. [Burnley FC in the Community](#) Well done, Patsy - we are extremely proud of you!



Healthy Snack Reminder 🍎👉

From after half term, at break time, children will only be allowed to bring fruit or vegetables as a snack. As a healthy school, we want to encourage good eating habits, support children's wellbeing, and help them stay focused and energized for learning.

Children in Reception to Year 2 will continue to be provided with fruit in school, so there is no need to send in a snack for these year groups.

Children in Key Stage 2 may bring in a piece of fruit or vegetables only to enjoy at break time.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us promote a healthy school. 🍎🥕

Year 5 Swimming 🏊

Year 5 Swimming will resume on Monday 2nd March 2026 the whole class will be going swimming together.

We ask parents to remind children of the safety rules so they can enjoy their swimming time weekly at St Peters.

Please make sure they have their swimming kit each Monday and are prepared.

Forest School /Outdoor learning Sessions - Spring Two 🌲🍃🏡

See below for Year Groups who will be accessing Forest School /outdoor learning in Spring Two. Please make sure your child brings in suitable wellies and waterproofs.

They may come to school wearing old clothes on the day of their Forest School. If you are struggling with providing waterproofs and wellies please come and speak to us and we can help .

Tuesday am -Reception

Tuesday pm - Year One

Monday am - Year Four

Lent 🙏



Lent is just around the corner, and we are looking forward to sharing this special season with our children and families at St Mary's.

As part of our Lenten journey, the children will be joining the Parish at St Mary's Church to share in daily Mass at 9:30am on the following dates:

- **Reception and Year 6 – 26/2/26**
- **Year 1 and Year 5 – 10/3/26**
- **Year 3 – 17/3/26**

Parents and carers are very welcome to join us at these Masses. As we are on half term for Ash Wednesday, we will instead be sharing a whole-school Mass together at school on Friday 6th March at 9:15am. Again, all parents and carers are warmly invited to attend.

Please note that there will be no Celebration Assembly on this day.

To conclude our Lenten journey, we would like to invite you to our Stations of the Cross Prayer Stations, which will be planned and delivered by our Chaplaincy Team. This will take place during Holy Week, on Tuesday 31st March at 9:30am, at school.




We look forward to this special time of Lent and to sharing it with you all!

Also, During Lent each Friday we will be wearing purple in exchange for a donation for our local foodbanks in the community.

These dates are as follows:

- Friday 27th February
- Friday 6th March
- Friday 13th March
- Friday 20th March
- Friday 27th March

Library

  **Guess what? Our library has opened its doors to everyone and their grown-ups... and we can't wait!**  **Every Friday after school, the library will turn into a cosy little adventure zone where you can:**

- **Dive into new stories**
- **Discover magical worlds**
- **Pick out a brilliant book to take home**

Bring your curiosity, bring your imagination — and bring your grown-ups too. We'd love to see you there!

Please note the library is now located in the main school building, pop into the office and we can show you the way!

Lunchtime Clubs

Next week we have some of the following clubs starting during lunchtimes... if you would love to learn a new hobby or practise some existing skills please come along!

Monday Lunchtime - Chaplaincy Team (existing members only)

Monday Lunchtime - Well-being

Tuesday Lunchtime - Choir (KS2 Children) - this will be starting after half term

Wednesday Lunchtime - Dance Club (KS2 Children)

Thursday Lunchtime - Prodigy/Timestable Rockstars Maths Practice (Years 3 &4)

Friday Lunchtime - School Council (existing members only)

Learning Letters Spring 1

Homework We continue to ask that children read their reading books Wednesday, Thursday and bring that book on Friday.
Spellings will be given every Monday this term. Our class spelling test takes place every Friday morning.

Year 1 have practiced number formation and have started to look at adding numbers within 10 (number bonds).

You will see below a few ideas for activities relating to our current topic. Please use one of these ideas or use your own idea as a basis for a home learning challenge this half-term. You can draw pictures, write sentences, or even take photographs of the work that you have carried out at home. Please hand your homework into school on or before Thursday 12th February so that we celebrate the children's hard work.


Make a book about the special people in your life.

Create a band for the little boy. What would it be called?

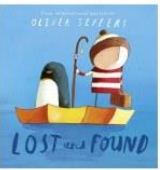
Write a short story based on a penguin. What would it look like? Where would it live?

Make a 3D junk model of a penguin.

Paint or draw a labelled picture of the winter season.



Year 1
Miss Daley
Learning Letter Spring 1 2025



Mathematics
This half term we will revisit place value and then apply this to other mathematical topics. We will also cover adding by counting on up to 20, find and make number bonds to 20, near doubles and missing number problems. Playing games that involve mathematics at home will enhance children's understanding of place value and counting.

Key instant Recall facts


- Counting on from any number up to 20
- Counting backwards from any numbers between 0-20
- Number bonds to 10.

English
This half term we will read *Lost and Found* by Oliver Jeffers. The children will use different grammar skills throughout this unit to write in role of the character, explore thoughts and feelings and write their very own invented version of this fictional story.

Children will take part in a minimum of 3 reading practices a week - Monday, Wednesday and Friday. We focus on different aspects of reading throughout these 3 days. This includes...

Reading practice 1: Decoding - identifying phonics within text
Reading practice 2: Prosody - reading with expression.
Reading practice 3: Comprehension - questioning throughout the story.

The same book is sent home on Wednesdays for children to read along with a reading for pleasure book.



Religious Education
In Religious studies this term, children will look closely at:
Anthology - *Galilee to Jerusalem*

It focuses the learning objectives due to know and understand:

- Who Simon is and how he was guided by the Holy Spirit.
- Who did Jesus meet in his adult life as he begins his mission.

Topic

In Art, the children will be looking at the unit 'Colour splash - Painting and Mixed Media'. We will also be looking at the artists Clarice Cliff and Jasper Johns.

In Science, Year 1 will look closely at 'Animals and Classification'. The children will be identifying and naming a variety of common animals that are carnivores, omnivores and herbivores.

In History, Year 1 will study the unit Castles. By the end of the topic children will have an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of people in a medieval castle. Be able to find and label the parts of a motte and bailey castle. To describe who William the Conqueror was and what he did and retell the Battle of Hasting using the Bayeux Tapestry.

In ICT, with Mrs Gorman, Year 1 will carry out Programming unit - Moving a robot. Children will explore using individual commands, both with other learners and as part of a computer program. They will identify what each floor robot command does and use that knowledge to start predicting the outcome of programs.

In Music, with Mrs Gorman, all the learning in this half term is focused around different genres such as pop, reggae and funk.

Thank you all for your support. Please contact school if you have any questions or concerns about your child's learning, or wish to discuss any other issue.

Home learning challenge
Fancy a home learning challenge? Here are some ideas of what you might like to do. You can send photos of the work on Class Dojo for us all to see.


Build a 3-D model.

Make a board game about the River Nile.


Find a pyramid net online and create your own model of an Egyptian pyramid.

Make a Scarab beetle box.

Create a project about King Tut. Why was he so famous?


St Mary's R.C. Primary School, Burnley

Learn and grow together in Christ.



Year 4 Learning Letter
Mrs Haida Spring 1 2026

Mathematics

This term, we will begin with multiplication and division, where children will focus on their 7x and 11x tables and related division facts. They will also practise written methods for larger calculations. Please encourage your child to use Times Tables Rockstars, which is a fantastic way to build speed and confidence. Next, we will move on to length and perimeter, learning how to measure accurately and calculate the perimeter of different shapes. After that, we will explore fractions, comparing and ordering them, and finding equivalents. Finally, we will finish the term with decimals, starting with tenths and progressing to hundredths, making links to fractions along the way. Please encourage your child to use Times Tables Rockstars, which is a fabulous way for children to improve their knowledge in this area.

English

This half term, the children will enjoy reading *The Firework Maker's Daughter* by Philip Pullman as our main fiction text, exploring themes of issues and dilemmas. We will use this novel as inspiration for writing, developing grammar skills and focusing on accurate punctuation of speech and the use of commas in complex sentences. Building on this, the children will move into a unit on persuasion, where they will learn the key features of persuasive writing before creating their own advert or notice. Later in the term, we will read *The Last Bear* by Hannah Gold, which will provide further opportunities for discussion and comprehension, as well as inspiring responses.

Reading

Children will participate in daily 20-minute whole-class reading sessions a week. During these sessions the teacher and teaching assistant will work with all of the children on a text carefully selected to offer an appropriate level of challenge. Children will be taught different reading strategies that revolve around the following key areas of reading: vocabulary, inference, prediction, explaining, retrieval and summarising. Please support your child with their home reading.

Religious Education

In Religious studies this term, children will look closely at:

- Local Church
- Eucharist
- Lent/Easter
- Pentecost

Topic

In Science, our topic is States of Matter. This term, your child will:

- Compare and group materials as solids, liquids, or gases.
- Observe how materials change state when heated or cooled, and measure or research the temperature at which these changes occur.
- Learn about evaporation and condensation and how these processes are part of the water cycle.
- Investigate how the rate of evaporation changes under different conditions.
- Carry out practical activities to explore these concepts and apply their understanding to real-life examples.

History/Geography

This half term we will complete our topic of Ancient Egypt. Throughout the topic, your child will develop their understanding of chronology and learn how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources. When we have completed this learning, we will move on to a Geography unit around North America.

Art

The children will be painting and using mixed media.

Computing

Programming and data logging.

Spanish

Presenting myself.

Other important information

- PE takes place on Monday and Tuesday afternoons.
- Forest school will take place on Friday afternoons.
- Ukulele lessons are on a Thursday afternoon.


Thank you all for your support. Please communicate with school should you have any questions or concerns about your child's learning or any other issue.

In addition to reading, times tables and spelling work, it would be lovely if you could try some more creative activities at home.

You will see below a few ideas for possible activities to complete at home relating to our current work. You can draw pictures, write sentences, create a PowerPoint or even take photographs. Please complete any challenges on or before Friday 13th February so we can see your hard work. Have fun!

Thinking about our science lessons, create a 3D solar system.

Using your knowledge of portraits, create a piece of artwork of an alien.



Year 5 Miss Howorth
Learning Letter Spring 1 2026

Mathematics

This half term, we will consolidate our previous work on multiplication and division, and we will then move on to fractions and percentages. It is very important that children know all the multiplication facts and associated division facts, and that they are able to utilise their knowledge in a range of contexts. Support will be given at school but help at home via the Times Tables Rockstars would be very much appreciated. I can send your child home with their login details on request.

English

This half term we will study the wonderful genre of science fiction. The children will use different grammar skills throughout this unit and, for a final piece, write their own story based using features found in the genre. Children will continue to practice Year 4 statutory spellings within this unit and your support in assisting your child to learn these spellings is very much appreciated.

Reading

Children will participate in five 30-minute whole class guided reading sessions a week, learning different reading strategies such as inference, skimming and scanning to aid and improve their reading comprehension.

Suggested reading for Year 5:

Explore other works linked to our class novel and in the science fiction genre. The following are especially recommended:

The Kid Who Came From Space – Ross Welford
George's Secret Key to the Universe – Stephen and Lucy Hawking
Cosmic – Frank Cottrell Boyce

Religious Education

In Religious studies this term, children will look closely at:

- Continuing Jesus' mission in diocese
- Lent, giving and sacrifice

Science

This half term, we will be looking Earth and space. We will be looking at the solar system and how Earth's movement and rotation affects us.

Art

In art, we will be studying how to create portraits using paint and mixed-media. The children will study his famous portraits, explore use of composition and colour and as a final piece, produce their own artwork of a portrait.

Other important information:

- PE in Year 5 is on Thursday and swimming is on Monday.
- Please can you make sure your child's belongings, including their uniform, are clearly marked with their name.
- Forest School is on Tuesday afternoons. Please ensure your child has appropriate footwear and coats for the weather.
- Try and read with your child as often as possible.

Thank you all for your support. Please communicate with school should you have any questions or concerns about your child's learning or any other issue.

Miss Howorth

In addition to reading, SATs Companion and spelling work, it would be lovely if you could try some more creative activities at home.


You will see below a few ideas for possible activities to complete at home relating to our current work. You can draw pictures, write sentences, create a PowerPoint or even take photographs. Please complete any challenges on or before Friday 13th February so we can see your hard work. Have fun!

Thinking about our class novel, create a 3D scene from The Wizard of Oz.


Design a poster for a film version of The Wizard of Oz.

Create a 3D volcano!

Research Picasso, create a piece of artwork based on The Eucharist.



St. Mary's R.C. Primary School
Learn and Grow Together in Christ



Year 6
Mrs Blezard & Mrs Stalton
Learning Letter Spring 1 2026

Mathematics

This half term, we will move on to ratio, algebra and decimals. It is very important that children know all the multiplication facts and associated division facts, and that they are able to utilise their knowledge in a range of contexts. Support will be given at school but help at home via the Times Tables Rockstars would be very much appreciated, as well as using SATs companion to support additional areas of work.

English

This half term we will study the wonderful novel "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" by L. Frank Baum. The children will use different grammar skills throughout this unit and, for a final piece, write their own story based on the storyline of this novel. Children will continue to practise Year 6 statutory spellings within this unit and your support in assisting your child to learn these spellings is very much appreciated.

Reading

Children will participate in five 20-minute whole class guided reading sessions a week, learning different reading strategies such as inference, skimming and scanning to aid and improve their reading comprehension.

Suggested reading for Year 6:

We encourage you to explore other texts, the following are especially recommended:

- Running Wild – Michael Morpurgo.
- Stormbreaker – Anthony Browatt.
- Michelle Magorian – Goodnight Mr. Tom.
- Alan Gratz – Refugee.
- Eoin Colfer – Artemis Fowl.

Religious Education

In Religious studies this term, children will look closely at:

- Local church- to understand the Bible as the story of God's love, told by the People of God.
- The Eucharist.

Science

This half term, we will be looking at Evolution and Inheritance, we will be able to recognise that living things have changed over time and that fossils provide information about living things that inhabited the Earth millions of years ago.

Art

In art, we will be studying the work of influential artists including: David Hockney, Paula Rego and Fiona Rae. The children will study their famous artworks, explore the use of composition and colour and as a final piece, produce their own artwork based on his distinctive style.


Other important information:

- PE in Year 6 is on Wednesday and Friday.
- Please ensure your child wears their PE kit in school on PE days.
- Please can you make sure your child's belongings, including their uniform, are clearly marked with their name.
- Try and read with your child as often as possible.

Thank you all for your support. Please communicate with school should you have any questions or concerns about your child's learning or any other issue.

Mrs Blezard & Mrs Stalton

Information for Parents i



March 2026

6-week Autism Cygnet Courses run regularly



<p>3 Anxiety / Behaviour PH Shodsworths, Blackburn 10am - 12pm</p>	<p>5 Online Understanding Autism 6pm - 7.30pm</p>	<p>6 Online who to turn to for Support? 10am - 11.30am</p>
<p>10 Online Autism & Sensory Processing 10.30am - 12.30pm</p>	<p>12 Online Parent Support 10.30am - 12pm</p>	<p>16 Autism + Education Basically Cheer, Burnley 10am - 12pm</p>
<p>17 Early Years Support Session (0-11y) PH New Era, Accrington 10am - 12pm</p>	<p>19 Parent Support PH Livesey, Blackburn 10am - 11.30am</p>	<p>24 Online Parent Support 6pm - 7.30pm</p>
<p>26 Teenage Years PH New Era, Accrington 10am - 12pm</p>	 <p>SCAN HERE for more information and self-referral</p>	





Please find below the link for Lancashire County Council's SEND newsletter, it is full of amazing activities for all children.

It is updated 4 times on their website.

[SEND Newsletter - Lancashire County Council](#)

East Lancashire Young People's Mental Health

**Concerned about your Mental Health?
Are you under 18 or concerned about
someone under 18?**

Advice sessions are available on-line via
'Attend Anywhere'
Delivered by CYPMH East
tinurl.com/ELCAS-LSCFT



Enter the word "CYPMH East" as the first name and "drop in" as the second name followed by your date of birth. You will then enter our virtual waiting area where we will collect you.

Wednesday 4 th March 2026	1pm – 3pm
Wednesday 11 th March 2026	3pm – 5pm
Wednesday 18 th March 2026	5pm – 7pm
Wednesday 25 th March 2026	1pm – 3pm

1 - Throughout March 2026, the Primary Mental Health Team are offering online drop-in sessions for children and young people, as well as for anyone who is worried about someone under the age of 18. These sessions provide a safe, confidential space to talk to a mental health practitioner and get advice or support.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators
CREATIVE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE READING

Reading regularly has a life-long impact, yet recent data from the National Literacy Trust shows a decline in reading for pleasure among 9-18 year olds, with just 22.7% enjoying it in 2025. Despite growing distractions, there are practical ways adults can spark a love of reading. This guide offers strategies and resources to help inspire young readers.

- 1. VALUE ALL READING**
When we think about reading, it's very easy to picture a child perched on a rug with a book. However, reading is so much more than that. It's how they explore the world, learn about things they're curious about, and discover new worlds. It's also a safe space. By using this, you can encourage the things they do with reading.
- 2. WIDEN THE SELECTION**
Once we know reading can be fun, we need to make sure the material is engaging. For young people, that's often comic books, graphic novels, and audiobooks. It's also important to offer a range of genres and formats. If you're not sure what to get, ask them what they want to read.
- 3. GIFT A BOOK**
One simple way to encourage reading is to gift a book. It's a great way to show you care. Whether it's a new novel or a classic, the gift shows you're invested in their learning and their interests. It's also a great way to introduce them to new authors and genres.
- 4. CONNECT WITH AUTHORS**
Meeting authors can be a really special experience. It's a chance to ask them questions and hear their thoughts. Encourage young people to look at ways to connect with authors. There are many ways to do this, from virtual events to book clubs.
- 5. BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE**
Encourage young people to explore the world around them. Reading is a great way to learn about different cultures, history, and science. Encourage them to explore the world around them. It's a great way to build their knowledge and interest in reading.
- 6. TALK BOOKS**
There are times when we need advice. It's not about what we read, but how we read. Reading is a social activity. We can talk about what we've read, share our thoughts, and learn from each other. It's a great way to build a reading community.
- 7. RECOMMENDATIONS**
As well as talking about the content of books, we can share what we've read. It's a great way to build a reading community. Encourage young people to share their recommendations. It's a great way to build their confidence and interest in reading.
- 8. GO DIGITAL**
With the rise of digital media, we need to think about how we read. Encourage young people to explore digital reading. There are many ways to do this, from audiobooks to e-books. It's a great way to build their digital literacy skills.
- 9. RECONNECT**
There are times when we need to reconnect. It's a chance to share our thoughts and learn from each other. Encourage young people to reconnect with reading. It's a great way to build their confidence and interest in reading.
- 10. LEAD BY EXAMPLE**
Let them see you reading. If you're not a reader, it's a great way to build their confidence and interest in reading. Encourage young people to read with you. It's a great way to build their confidence and interest in reading.

Meet Our Expert
Contributed to this guide is our award-winning reading expert at The National College. Through his programme, he supports schools to enhance reading for pleasure. He's also a regular speaker at conferences and events. He's also a regular contributor to the National Literacy Trust's blog.

Wake Up Wednesday
The National College

@wake_up_weds | www.thenationalcollege | @wake.up.wednesday | @wake.up.weds

With reading for pleasure in decline, this practical guide offers ten thoughtful ways to reignite children's enthusiasm for books. From valuing all forms of reading to broadening access to diverse materials, it explores how adults can nurture positive reading habits both at home and in school.

Digital tools, audiobooks and augmented reality are also considered as engaging ways to support today's readers. It also highlights the power of social connection – recommending books, reading together and meeting authors – alongside the importance of modelling reading ourselves. With expert insight from literacy specialist Carl Pattison, this edition provides supportive, achievable ideas to help young people reconnect with reading and see it as a meaningful part of everyday life.



**Every Tuesday at 10.30am
from 6th January 2026
Down Town
Charter Walk Shopping Centre
Burnley, BB11 1QJ**

**To register your interest, please scan the
QR code below or email
LRITesolandcareers@lancashire.gov.uk**



2 - Starting 6th January 2026, Down Town will be offering free informal ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes!

Two levels available:

- *Beginners: 10:30 AM*
- *Intermediate: 11:30 AM*

Register here: <https://forms.office.com/e/na6hWPb2st>

We also need your help with donations for our Mud Kitchen and forest school!

Donations of pots, pans and utensils for our mud kitchen would be very much appreciated, along with any old wellies and waterproofs that you no longer have a use for that our children can wear whilst joining in with our new forest school.

Many thanks

Our new school uniform is now available to purchase from Moonline. Prices are listed below.

We realise that the process converting to the new uniform has not been smooth sailing therefore we understand if you do not wish to purchase the new uniform until the new academic year (September 2026). Please note that when we return in September 2026 the new uniform will be compulsory for all pupils.

If you are in need of any of our 'old style' uniform, please get in contact with us and we can help with some of the stock we have in school.

We hope this provides families with ample time to make purchases and prepare for the transition.

Navy/Sky - ¼ Zip Top -3-4 Yrs - 11-12 Yrs - £13.99 12-13 Above - £14.99

Navy/Sky - Polo - 3-4 Yrs - 11-12 Yrs - £11.50 12-13 Above - £12.99

Navy/Sky - Shorts - 3-4 Yrs - 11-12 Yrs - £8.99 12-13 Above - £9.99

Navy/Sky - Leggings - £11.50 All sizes to 13 Years

Navy/Sky - Track Bottoms - £12.99 All sizes to 13 Years

Parents,

If there are any changes in terms of allergies, medication, contact numbers, photo consent or anything we need to know about please ensure that you are keeping us regularly up to date. If you also would like to come in and check with us that what we have on our system is correct please call into the office, it is so important that we have all the correct and relevant information to keep your children safe.

Kind Regards

The office team



St. Mary's R.C. Primary School
A Voluntary Academy
 Holcombe Drive, Burnley, Lancashire BB10 4BH
 Tel: (01282) 427546
 e-mail: messageus@st-marys-burnley.lancs.sch.uk
 web-site: www.st-marys-burnley.lancs.sch.uk
 Head teacher: Mr Ian Jones



Dear Parents/Carers

Due to a child in our school with a severe nut allergy we are now a nut free school.

Please ensure that any snack or packed lunch your child brings to school does not contain any nuts.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind Regards

School Office

Online Safety

Please find below some information on how to help keep children safe on social media and some guidance on how to set parental restrictions on devices and accounts.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ADULT ANIMATED CONTENT

Bright, bold, and widely shared, adult animated content is more popular than ever, but not always what it seems. These videos, which may appear cartoonish and harmless, often contain strong language, sexual themes, graphic violence, or drug footage. Many are accessible through platforms like YouTube, TikTok or streaming services, where filters may not catch them in time.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- MISLEADING VISUAL STYLE**
Many adult animators mimic the colorful, exaggerated style of children's cartoons. This consistency misleads not just children, but also adults, who thinking they are watching a program aimed at children, watch the content fully, unaware of references or implications that appear to be aimed at older audiences. This includes strong language, or highly inappropriate language, or references to sexual violence and drug use.
- EXPOSURE TO HARMFUL THEMES**
A number of adult animated shows deal with themes that involve an inappropriate amount of violence, sexual violence, racism, sexism, and themes that are not suitable for children. Some shows also feature an explicit focus on drug use, which may lead to confusion, curiosity, or experimentation, or even encourage children to be involved in a real-world crime.
- RISK OF DISTRESS AND FEAR**
Some adult animators, especially horror-themed series or one-off episodes, use shock, violence, disturbing imagery, unsettling music, and explicit threats to scare children. This is often done to attract attention, but it can be particularly harmful to children who are already struggling with anxiety or other mental health issues. Some children have reported feeling scared or confused.
- INFLUENCE OF EDGY HUMOUR**
Dark, edgy humour is common in adult animation, and often involves puns and references to sexual violence, racism, sexism, and drug use. While children may think they are watching a show without fully understanding the meaning, this can lead to confusion and fear, or even to children being exposed to violence or drug use, or to children being exposed to sexual violence or drug use.
- ALGORITHMIC RECOMMENDATIONS**
Many platforms are designed to keep users watching by suggesting similar content. If a child watches one video, they may be recommended other videos, including ones that are more explicit or violent. This can lead to a rapid spiral into inappropriate, offensive, or even violent content.
- DESENSITISATION TO VIOLENCE**
By being exposed to violence in often exaggerated and unrealistic ways, children may become desensitized to violence. This can lead to children being more likely to engage in violent behaviour, or to children being more likely to be victims of violence. This can also lead to children being more likely to be victims of violence, or to children being more likely to be victims of violence.

Advice for Parents & Educators

- LEARN WHAT CHILDREN ARE WATCHING**
Take the time to ask children what they're watching and why they're watching it. Use this as an opportunity to talk to them about what they're watching. This helps you spot inappropriate content early and allows children to ask for help or support in their own words, not just putting it off.
- USE PLATFORM SETTINGS WISELY**
Make use of built-in safety tools like content filters, restricted mode, and parental controls. These tools can help you control what your child sees, but they're not perfect. Some children may be able to bypass these tools, so it's important to have ongoing conversations about online safety and to encourage children to report any inappropriate content.
- TALK ABOUT WHAT'S APPROPRIATE**
Keep conversations open and non-judgmental. Talk about why certain themes or topics are not appropriate for children, even if they appear to be harmless. Help children understand that just because something is popular or allowed online, it doesn't mean it's suitable or safe. If they do have something to say, respond calmly, after reassurance, and explain things in an age-appropriate way.
- ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING**
Help children think carefully about what they watch. Talk about the differences between fictional animation and reality, and help them to question why certain content is made. Encourage them to think about the reasons behind why they're watching something, and to consider whether it's really what they want to watch, or if they're just watching something because it's popular or because they're curious.

Meet Our Expert
Dr. Sarah-Jane Hill, Director for Educators, The National College has transformed the way education professionals go about their work. She's a leading expert on digital safety and online safety. She offers membership and packages to help of phone and types of setting, risk management, security, and more. Contact her for more information.

WakeUp Wednesday
The National College

Adult animated content is increasingly visible on platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and streaming services. While the bright visuals and cartoon style may seem harmless at first glance, many of these shows and clips are created specifically for mature audiences, featuring strong language, sexual references, graphic violence and unsettling themes.

This #WakeUpWednesday guide helps parents and educators understand the risks, from misleading visuals and algorithm-driven recommendations to desensitisation and edgy humour. It also offers practical advice on platform settings, open conversations and building children’s critical thinking, so young people can navigate online animation safely and confidently.

Social Media



Facebook (13+)

Included in Facebook’s settings are the ability to set who can see your posts, who can contact you and the ability to review all posts before appearing on your timeline.

Unfriending: go to their profile, click on the three dots, click on Following and tap Unfollow.

Blocking: go to their profile, click on the three dots and select Block.

Facebook Privacy Check up: this tool helps you review your settings: <https://www.facebook.com/help/1297502253597210>

You can also set up Family Centre (supervision) on Messenger: <https://m-gb.facebook.com/help/messengerapp/182587384506653>



Instagram (13+)

When you set up your account, it is automatically set as public (except if you are under 18 and it is set to private as default, although you can change it to public).

Remove a follower: Go to their profile and tap ‘Following’ and select Unfollow.

Blocking/Reporting: To do this, tap their username, tap on the 3 dots in the top right and select Block or Report.

Turn off commenting on a post: Tap the 3 dots above your post and select Turn Off Commenting. Find out more here: <https://help.instagram.com/196883487377591>

You can also set up Family Centre (supervision) to give you access to tools such as see who your child follows and screen time: <https://help.instagram.com/4588867563184597>
[helpref-faq_content](https://help.instagram.com/4588867563184597/helpref-faq_content)



WhatsApp (13+)

By default, WhatsApp sets your privacy settings to allow any WhatsApp user to see your read receipts, last seen, about and profile photo. To change any of these settings, go to Settings and then select Privacy.

Blocking/Reporting: You can block and report a user by clicking on their name and selecting Block or Report. You can report any issues direct to WhatsApp within the app by going to Settings, Help, Help Center and Contact Us.

Find out more here: https://faq.whatsapp.com/1313491802751163?locale=en_US



TikTok (13+)

You can choose to have a public or private account. If you set your account to private, then only those you accept as friends can see your videos. To do this, go to your profile, tap the 3 line icon, tap Settings and Privacy, go to Privacy and turn on Private account (by default accounts for people under 16 are set to private).

Report inappropriate content: you can report an account, video, comment and message. Follow the instructions here: <https://support.tiktok.com/en/safety-hc/report-a-problem>

Family Pairing

You can use Family Pairing to link your own TikTok account to your child’s account. This will give you access to additional controls such as:

- **Screen Time Management:** Control how long your child can spend on TikTok.
- **Direct Messages:** Limit who can send messages to them or turn off direct messaging completely. Direct messaging is automatically disabled for registered accounts between the ages of 13 and 15.
- **Restricted Mode:** Restrict the appearance of inappropriate content.
- **Search -** Option to disable.

Find out more here: <https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide/>



X (13+)

When you set up your X account, you can choose whether you would like to keep your tweets public or protected (private). To check, go to Settings and Privacy, select Privacy and Safety and then Audience and tagging and ensure Protect your posts is selected.

Unfollow somebody: Go to their profile, click on ‘following’ to then select ‘unfollow’.

Blocking/Report: Go to their profile, click the three dots and select block or report.

Location: To keep your location private (so followers can’t see the location you are tweeting from), under Settings and Privacy, select Privacy and Safety, select Location Information and ensure Precise location is disabled.

Find out more here: <https://help.x.com/en/safety-and-security/x-privacy-settings>



Snapchat (13+)

When you set up your account, it is automatically set so only friends you’ve added can contact you or view your story.

Unfriend: Go to the chat screen, tap and hold on a friend’s name, tap ‘Manage Friendship’ and then tap ‘Remove Friend’.

Block a friend: Go to the chat screen, tap and hold on a friend’s name, tap ‘Manage Friendship’ and then tap ‘Block’.

Location settings: This feature allows your friends to see where you are (including when you are at home) when you have the app open. It is so important that you check your child’s settings for this feature. Your location won’t be shared on the map until you open it for the first time, at which point you can choose (please note that snaps you submit to Snap Map can still show up on the Map, no matter what location setting you choose):

- **Ghost Mode (Only Me):** your location won’t be visible to anyone else.
- **My Friends:** your location will be shared with all of your friends.
- **Select Friends, Except ...:** your location will be shared with your friends, except the friends on this list.
- **Only These Friends ...:** choose specific friends to share your location with.

Who Can Contact Me: in your privacy settings you can choose who can contact you directly with Snaps, Chats, calls, etc. Remember, if you’re in a group, then anyone can communicate with you in that Group Chat regardless of your settings. Find out more here: <https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/7012343074580-How-do-I-change-my-privacy-settings-on-Snapchat>

Family Centre: this can be set up to provide parental control settings such as limit your child’s ability to view certain content in the Stories and Spotlight tabs. Find out more here: <https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/7121384944788-What-is-Family-Centre>

Mobile devices

You can set up free parental controls and restrictions on most mobile devices, which can limit what your child can access.

iOS



Using Content & Privacy Restrictions in Screen Time, you can block or limit specific apps and features on your child's device. Find out more here: <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/105121>.

Apple have also created this support page for families: <https://www.apple.com/uk/families/>

Android



When you turn on parental controls, you can restrict what content can be downloaded or purchased from Google Play based on maturity level.

Find out more here: <https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/10257387?hl=en-GB>

You can also set up Family Link, which lets you set digital ground rules as well as see where they are, receive notifications when they arrive or leave a certain location and set screen time limits. You will need to download Family Link onto your own device first and then link your child's account to it.

Find out more here: <https://families.google/familylink/>

Dates for your diary

Upcoming events:

March:

- **Monday 9th** - Science week
- **Thursday 12th** - Stage 4 sacramental programme meeting @ St Mary's school
6:30pm
- **Tuesday 17th** - St Patrick's day
- **Monday 30th** - Holy Week