

# Damers

## News

October  
2024



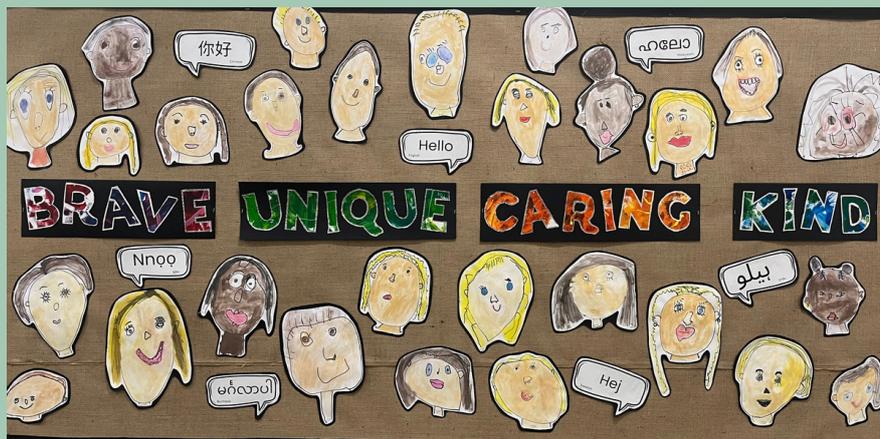
A very warm welcome to our Autumn newsletter! This half term has been longer than usual but it seems to have flown since we welcomed our new Foundation classes in - they have settled in so well! It has been wonderful to see them gain confidence, make friends and make a great start to their learning. I think the children will be glad of a break now though!

We have enjoyed some events and trips so far this year which bring so much to the children's learning, complimenting all the work they do in their lessons. Across the year groups have enjoyed a dance workshop, a Poundbury Arts workshop, an African drum session, a farm visit, a literary visit to Thomas Hardy's and even a visit from our PCSO Jane Goodwin. We begin our after school clubs when we return and are excited to provide a real variety again including Spanish, rugby, journalling, wild art and cooking - hopefully something for everyone. Our teachers have been working really hard to produce our brand new class blogs. Please have a look at them on the [website](#).

Some of our budding Year 4 writers have entered the Domvs writing competition, a story beginning "I cannot believe I left the door open..." There were some gripping tales - all high quality writing to be judged by Lord Julian Fellowes. We will wait and see!

Finally, ask your child what the school vision is, photo below - hopefully they will be very proud to share this with you and tell you what it means for them! Thank you for your continued support and enjoy half term, Warmest wishes for an enjoyable half term,

Mrs Greenham



# FOUNDATION

Our 90 new Foundation children have settled in beautifully. We have been celebrating what is different about each of us: what makes me special. Over the summer each family decorated a square to represent what they like and what's important to them. We patchworked them together to make class Elmer the elephants. Each elephant represents the children and families in that class and what's special about them. We have been excited to welcome an increasing number of children of different ethnicities and have a record number of bilingual children this year.



# YEAR 1



In Science Year 1 have been thinking about the four seasons and how the weather changes. This half term has definitely showed us that Autumn weather can be unpredictable! We have thought about how the weather impacts humans and animals. We have spent lots of time outdoors observing how the school grounds are changing now the weather is getting cooler.

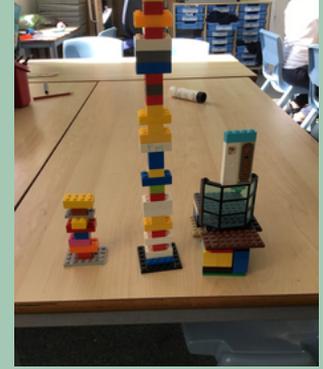
This seasonal song has been a huge hit in class - click on the link to sing along!

[Seasons Song](#)

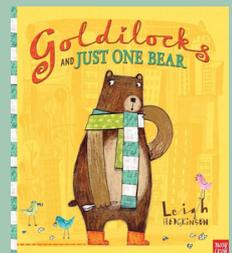
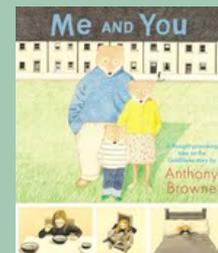
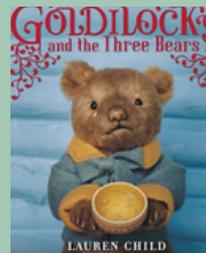


# YEAR 2

We have loved learning all about Kenya in Year 2. We've tasted food grown in Kenya, created models of Nairobi landmarks in lego, used our map skills to locate different physical features and enjoyed a brilliant drumming workshop. We learnt about what the djembe drums were made from. We had great fun practising different rhythms, learning a piece of music called the Kulu, a traditional West African song to celebrate the fish harvest.



The children in Year 2 have also done some brilliant writing about Goldilocks. We've read three different versions and created our own sequels.



# YEAR 3

This half term we've been exploring plants in our science topic. At the beginning of term we listed all the things a plant needs to grow: light, water, nutrients from soil and space to grow. We discussed what would happen if we tried to grow seeds without light so we set up a fair test experiment with cress seeds.

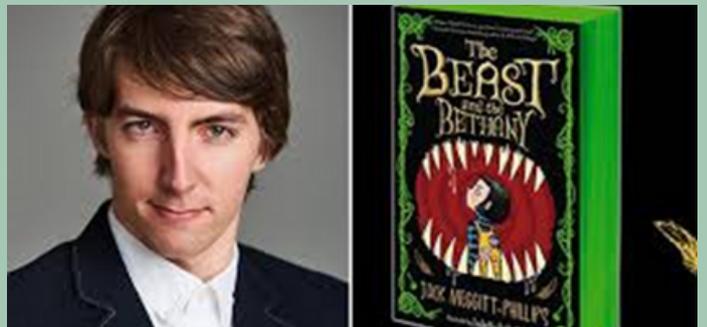


As you can see, the seeds in the dark grew much taller but look far less healthy than the ones that had all the variables. Some of our children described it as "growing tall because they were looking for the light".

Our next experiment is to try and show how water is transported through plants. Keep checking our blogs for the pictures of that one!

# YEAR 4

Year 4 were lucky enough to walk to the Thomas Hardy theatre last week to see the author Jack Meggitt-Phillips talk about his books. He writes a series called The Beast and the Bethany about a creature that likes eating all sorts of strange things. Jack was really funny and he showed us all how we could create our own 'beasts' using three ingredients.... something we are scared of, something disgusting and something we love. We all really enjoyed the morning and lots of children have been keen to start reading his books! Jack said he has wanted to be an author since reading Roald Dahl books when he was 9 or 10. I wonder if he has now inspired any young writers through his own stories?



## BASE NEWS

We have been learning how to work as a team this half term. We have spent a lot of time getting to know new friends and learning about our likes and dislikes as well as learning about how we learn in our school in order for us to achieve our very best. It has been really great finding out what we all enjoy. We have particularly enjoyed beginning to learn the ukulele which we will continue to do after the half term break.



Dear Bus  
 If you keep  
 being naughty  
 you will get  
 sent to the  
 head teacher!

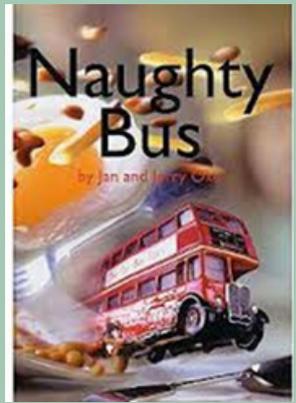
From Rosa




once a boy got a  
 naughty bus. First the  
 bus faced in the wet  
 beans. Next it went  
 into the dark spiky  
 garden. Then the bus  
 fell into the dark wet  
 pond. Finally it fell  
 asleep.



# Writers' Corner

Year 1 writing, inspired by the Naughty Bus

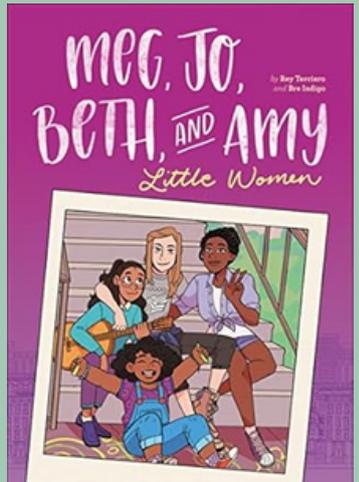
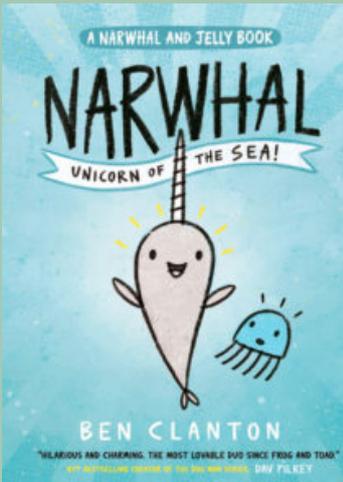
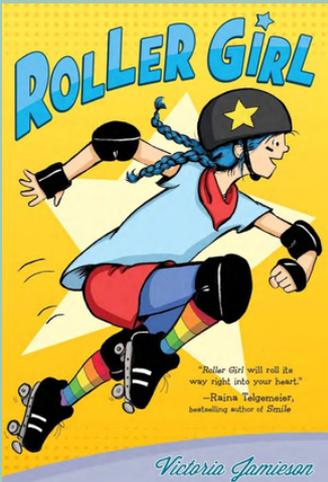
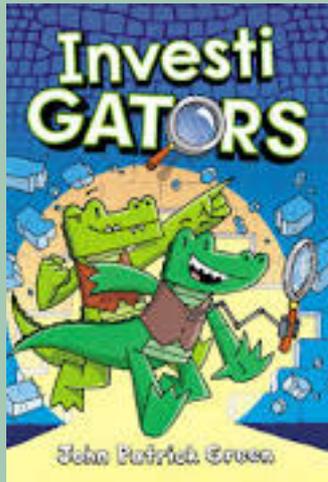


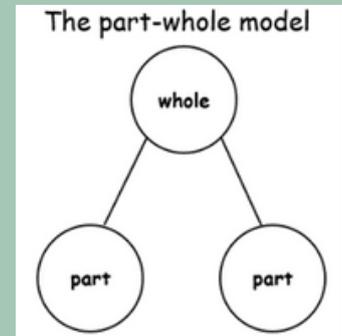
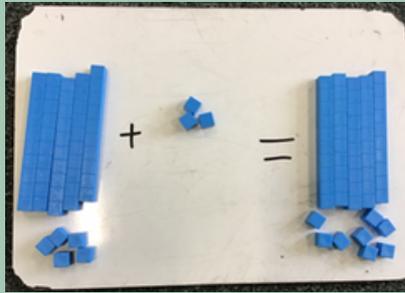
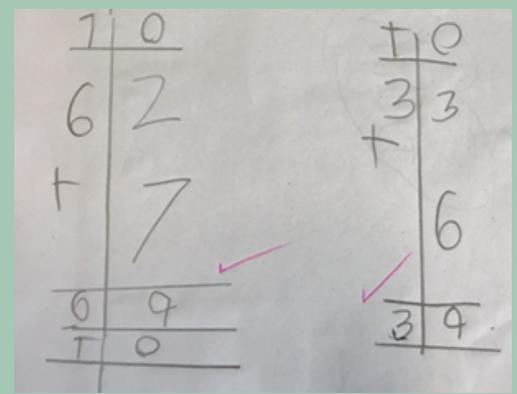
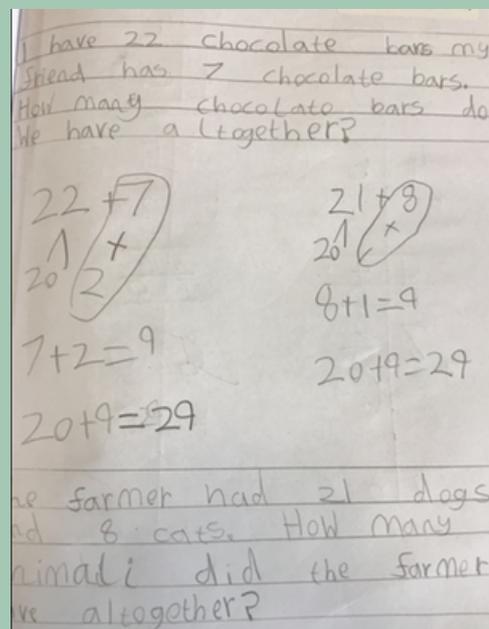
# READING ROCKS



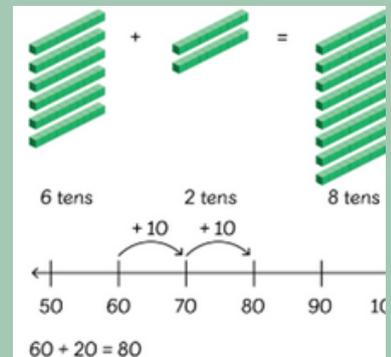
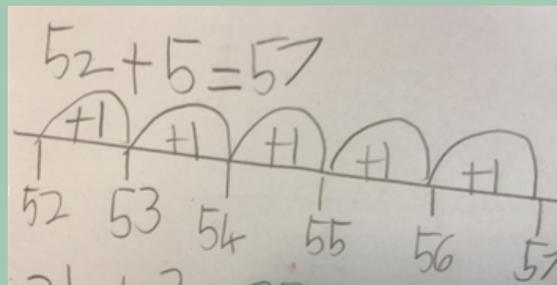
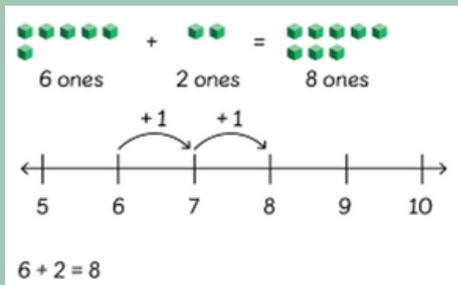
Some of our year 2 children enjoyed a visit to the Dorchester Literary Festival to hear an author and illustrator talk about their new graphic novel - Poo Crew Adventures.

Here are some more graphic novel recommendations to try.





Year 2 have been looking at different ways to solve addition equations.



## R.E AND JIGSAW

In October, many Jewish people were celebrating Rosh Hashanah, meaning 'head of the year'. You can learn more about it [here](#):



Yom Kippur, another Jewish celebration took place between 11th-12th October. You can learn more about it [here](#).



Many Sikhs and Hindus will be celebrating Diwali, the festival of light, on 31st October - 1st November. You can learn more [here](#).



Jigsaw PSHE for next half term will be "Celebrating Differences."

Children will explore and find out how our body changes as we grow. Please see what we teach in our Personal, Social, Health and Economic lessons: [PSHE lessons](#)



# Super Spotters

Autumn has arrived and it's a great time of year to do some bird spotting.

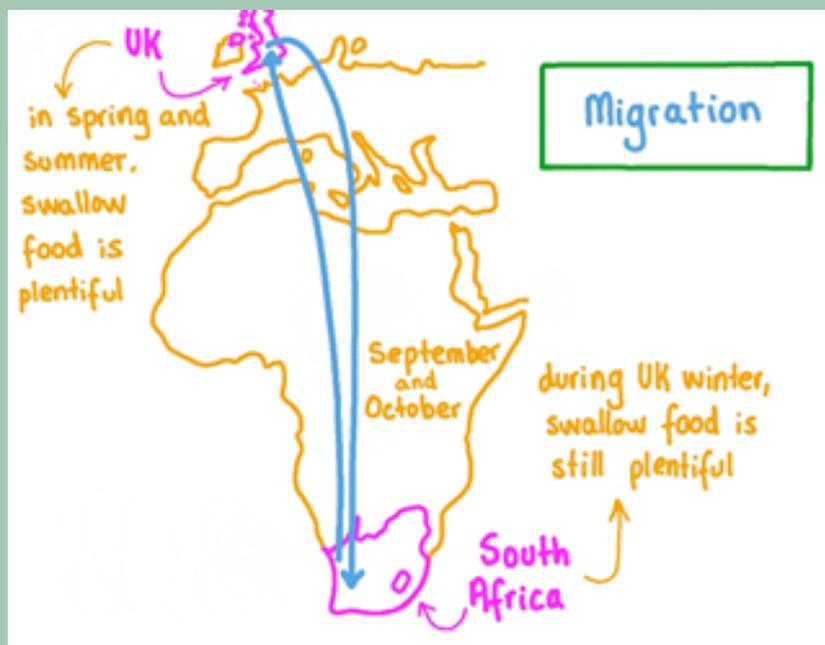
On the Great Field you can see flocks of little goldfinches flitting from tree to tree. You will always see them in groups as it helps keep them safe from predators and they have beautiful black, yellow and red feathers.



At this time of year you might also be lucky enough to spot a murmuration of starlings. Murmurations typically occur in November until as late as March, whilst the birds are roosting together through winter. In the evening they gather in the skies in vast numbers and fly together making amazing patterns before they go down into the trees and pack themselves together so they are safe and warm at night. As the evenings get darker see if you can spot a murmuration on your way home from school.



The swifts, swallows and house martins that have been swooping over the school field all summer will soon be leaving to fly all the way back to Africa which is an 8,000 mile journey! This means flying 200 miles a day, averaging 6 weeks of virtually non-stop flying time, only stopping briefly to catch food and rest in large flocks at reed-beds. Good luck to these amazing little birds, hopefully we'll see them back again next spring.





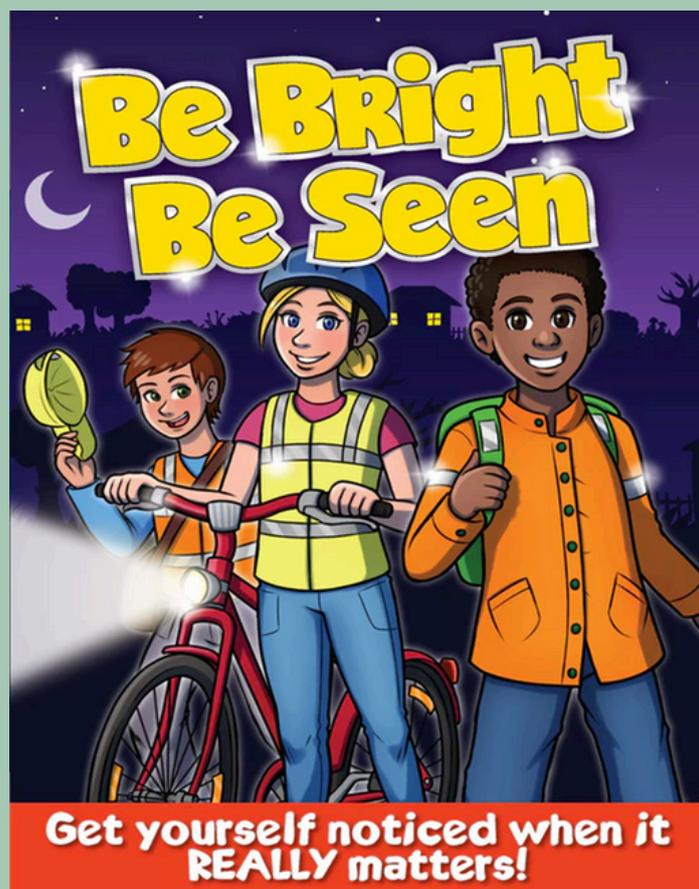
Our **Eco Club** crew are ready to go next half term and have already got some great ideas to add to our sustainability action plan. We will be sharing our new projects for 2024/25 soon!



We always try to encourage our pupils and families to cycle or scoot to school when they can - here are some reminders about doing this safely especially in the darker evenings:

To stay safe on the road you should:

- Always use the Green Cross Code STOP, LOOK, LISTEN!
- Always hold an adult's hand when you are near the road
- Wear a seat belt when travelling in the car and use the right child or booster seat
- Make sure you are properly trained to ride your bike on the road
- Always wear a cycle helmet and bright reflective clothes when on your bike
- Be bright and be seen whenever you are near a road
- Put away your headphones or mobile phone when crossing the road
- Always walk on the pavement or footpath where there is one
- Know and understand the school crossing signs



# MUSIC

## Wessex Schools Music Ensembles

Does your child play an instrument or enjoy singing? Join a Wessex Schools Music Ensemble!

We run several weekly cross-school groups:

Wednesdays @ Thomas Hardye School

4-4:50pm Bandemonium (for wind/brass players grade 0-2), Stringalings (for violinists/cellists grade 0-2)

5-5:50pm Dorchester Children's Orchestra (for all orchestral instruments from approx. grade 2+)

Thursdays @ Prince of Wales School

3:45 - 4:30pm Skylarks Children's Choir for children from years 2-4. For children who enjoy singing and would like to gain experience of singing a wide range of songs in harmony.

Fridays @ Thomas Hardye School

4 - 4:50pm Nightingales Choir for children from years 5-8. For more advanced singers who enjoy singing in harmony.

Ensembles cost £38 per term, but you are welcome to try a session for free without committing.

For more information and to apply: <https://music.wessex.ac/general-information.html>  
<https://music.wessex.ac/apply-for-a-wessex-music-ensemble.html>



## SONGS OF THE TERM

Click on the links to sing along!



[Cauliflowers Fluffy](#)

[Juba](#)

# PTA NEWS

Thank you once again for all of your support over the first half term. We have had a wonderful time allocating money raised from the Summer Fayre & Raffle! This year we have pledged not only to support book bags and school trips but also to give £2000 towards the cost of zoning for the year one outside spaces, £700 towards new books for KS1 and provided the funds for each class to have a visualiser. We thank you all for your kind donations that have made this possible.

Thank you so much to all of the support we received for all of the Halloween events! From purchasing a pumpkin pack, donating cakes or helping out on a stall at the fayre you have all been amazing! Thank you so much, we are all incredibly lucky to be part of such a wonderful community.

*How else can I help to support Damers?*

Simple. volunteer at one of our events! Or...

Feeling lucky? Damers Lucky Numbers is running again this year, if you would like the chance to win big each month please email [damerspta@gmail.com](mailto:damerspta@gmail.com). We will provide you with all of the details you need to sign up. It is £2 a month to enter and all money raised is split 50/50 between the winner and Damers PTA.

You can also help us on our 'easyfundraising' page. Thanks to our current supporters Damers First School has raised £712.65.

All you have to do is sign up and a percentage of what you spend is donated by the retailer and no cost to you! Click on the [link](#) to sign up and help us!

If you would like to be involved in the PTA please drop us an email at [damerspta@gmail.com](mailto:damerspta@gmail.com) or pop along to our next meeting on 19th November from 6pm at the main school reception.

Upcoming PTA events:

13th November 2024- Damers Raising Readers Story Night  
4-5.15pm

19th November 2024- PTA meeting 6pm

21st November 2024- Second Hand Uniform Sale 2.30-4pm

We had a visit from PCSO Jane Goodwin to introduce herself as someone who helps us in our community. Jane told us about all the equipment she used, what her day was like and who she helped. The children had some great questions to ask and learnt about the kinds of people she helps daily. They had a chance to try on some uniform and know they can say "hello" to Jane when they see her out and about in town and in Poundbury.



BBC's 500 Words –  
the UK's largest children's writing competition –  
is now open for entries!

Children are encouraged to write a story they'd love to read themselves in no more than 500 Words. Entries are open until 9pm on Friday 8 November 2024.

The competition is split into two different age groups – 5-7 and 8-11 year-olds. 50 finalists will be invited to a glamorous grand final at Buckingham Palace in February next year, where the bronze, silver and gold winners in each category will have their stories read out by celebrities and win prizes, with gold winners also claiming 500 books for their school library.



Over the coming weeks many families will be having celebrations which may include the use of fire in the form of candles, sparklers, bonfires or fireworks.

Please help keep everyone safe by:

- Keeping matches and lighters out of reach of children
- Keeping children away from candles, especially if wearing fancy dress which may not have the same fire safety standards
- Follow the fireworks code

For a chance to win a VIP trip to a DWFRS Fire Station, a Blaze bear and a Lego or PlayMobil Emergency Services set enter the prize draw with your child.

Visit [Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service | Pumpkins, Bonfires and Fireworks \(dwfire.org.uk\)](http://Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service | Pumpkins, Bonfires and Fireworks (dwfire.org.uk)) for further safety information and the prize draw.

# ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

## What **YOU** can do:

Try to telephone the school before 8.45am each day of your child's absence.

- Tell the school in advance, of any medical appointments and bring in appointment cards/letters.
- If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, send them in anyway as they often perk up on arrival. Check out the handy NHS [advice](#) is my child too ill for school.
- Have a backup plan for if your child misses transport, call on a family member, neighbour or friend if you can.
- If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance then talk to us as a first step so we can help!



## What **WE** will do:

- Check your child's attendance every day.
- Phone home to discuss your child's attendance with you.
- Invite you into school for attendance meetings if we are concerned.
- If we cannot establish a reason for absence, then we may make a welfare home visit.

F - 97.0%

1 - 96.2%

2 - 97.4%

3 - 97.3%

4 - 94.1%

# ONLINE SAFETY

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about IN-GAME CHAT

Video games are continuing to grow in popularity – including, of course, among children and young people – and the emergence of gaming communities has been accelerated by the inclusion of chat functionality across many different titles. While in-game chat isn't inherently a bad thing, it can create some concerns about online safety and the people that children might be interacting with.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHAT

There are a number of ways that gamers commonly chat with one another online. As the name would suggest, in-game chat happens within the game itself. There's also party chat: a group voice conversation that console users can have with anyone on the same platform. This tends to be more commonly used by players who already know each other. Finally, many gamers – especially on PC – will chat via a third-party app such as Discord.

#### CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Whether it's text- or voice-based, in-game chat is frequently open to all players to use. Many games default to making it an opt-in function, but some don't: meaning a child could start seeing messages within the game from people they're playing with, regardless of whether they know those individuals or not. While most strangers won't necessarily have ill intent, there are some who may behave inappropriately when chatting to a child – intentionally or otherwise.

#### DANGER OF GROOMING

It's been reported that some young gamers have encountered older players online who pretend to be a lower age to manipulate children, sending gifts in exchange for chatting and sending photos. Just as on any messaging platform, it's good to advise young people to avoid speaking to strangers; emphasise that they shouldn't accept gifts from anyone online that they don't know.

#### BULLYING AND ABUSE

While some in-game chat can turn toxic because of how a match plays out, others turn that way because of people who engage in trolling – in essence, behaving in an offensive and abusive way simply to cause pain or get a rise out of whoever they're talking to. These 'trolls' often lean on racial slurs, anti-LGBT sentiment and other hateful rhetoric; they normally feel most confident preying on younger, more impressionable gamers.

#### POTENTIAL FOR PRIVATE CHAT

If a player would like a re-match with a stranger after meeting them in the game, they can send a friend request, or use the party chat together in the future. For the most part, this is harmless – but it might lead to messages being exchanged in private. This could then escalate to the sharing of private information, and potentially attempts to manipulate or scam younger players.

#### COMPETITIVE ATMOSPHERE

Certain games are very competitive, and players can sometimes get upset if they feel a teammate is underperforming, an opponent won unfairly, or they're just a bad loser. This can lead to unpleasant messages that stray away from playful 'trash talk' and wander into the territory of bullying. Some players have been known to get incredibly abusive in situations like this, and the impact of this on a young gamer's emotional wellbeing could be severe.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

#### LOCK-DOWN IN-GAME CHAT

In-game chat can often be disabled in the game's settings. This allows children to play without risk of contact from strangers – but it will need to be done in each individual game. Text chat appears in the corner of the screen in many titles, so it's normally easy to take a quick glance and see what's being said. With voice chat, explain to children what behaviour is inappropriate, so they can spot the dangers themselves.

#### REPORT POTENTIAL OFFENDERS

Most games offer a robust means of reporting other players, so you can flag an account as potentially harmful. This normally leads to the account not being matched with yours in the future and, if that person's conduct breaks any of the game's rules, they may be banned from playing entirely. This is done within the game itself, so each title has a slightly different process, but these tend to be designed for simplicity.

#### CONSIDER OTHER CHAT OPTIONS

If a child wants to play with people they know, consider using party chat or a third-party service like Discord. This allows everyone involved to chat on a private server and even enjoy each other's company while playing different games. It's also far more secure, as anyone looking to join will need to request and be granted access – normally by whoever is hosting the chat.

#### COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Make sure children understand the differences between being competitive and being abusive. Talk about what constitutes unusual or inappropriate behaviour from strangers online. Be clear that if anything ever concerns or worries them, they should tell a trusted adult as soon as possible. Empower children to identify the risks of in-game chat for themselves and reassure them they won't get in trouble for seeking help if anything goes wrong.

#### Meet Our Expert

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



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at [nationalcollege.com/guides/in-game-chat](https://nationalcollege.com/guides/in-game-chat)

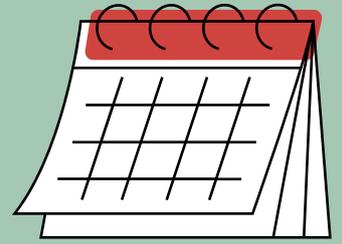
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# Upcoming Dates



- Monday 4th November - Back to School
- Wednesday 6th November - Year 1 Stay and.
- Wednesday 13th November - Story Night
- Monday 18th November - Year 3 Stay and.
- Wednesday 20th November - Foundation Stay and.
- Thursday 21st November - Year 2 Stay and.
- Friday 6th December - PTA Secret Shop
- Tuesday 10th December - Year 2 Christmas Productions
- Wednesday 11th December - Year 4 Stay and.
- Thursday 12th December - Foundation Christmas production
- Thursday 12th December - Year 4 Tank Museum
- Friday 13th December - Year 1 Christmas production
- Wednesday 18th December - Christmas Lunch day
- Thursday 19th December - Last day of term
- Friday 20th December - Inset day