



Parents' Weekly Newsletter

'Thriving to achieve our best - together'

24th September 2021

Message from Dr Craddock

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's now been three weeks since we've been back in school.

It has been lovely to see the children continuing to reconnect with their friends and classmates in the September sunshine as they settle back in to the more familiar routines of school life. We have seen some fabulously active learning taking place across the classes this week: from Forest School activities to bleep fitness testing in PE, Medieval Mania in History. Whilst hoola-hooping, football and table tennis are some of the games enjoyed at playtimes too. A very active week for everyone!

It has also been fantastic to see the new after – school clubs up and running, and children enjoying all the opportunities to have fun together. Football was a successful start, as Mr Sykes led both key stages through their paces on Tuesday. If your child has not yet signed up, please just add a note to their planner, giving permission to join the club. Your child can then show the teacher, who will give them a slip offering a place. Why not encourage your child to try something new — Mrs Uros and the children definitely have a jolly time in Zumba group, which is open to both key stages. Please look at the list sent out last week and sign up.

We love to see your achievements from home too, whether it's scoring a try at rugby, getting a picture published in a comic, or earning a new swimming badge. Please send the details and a photo to the school office, so we can include and recognise all achievements in our future newsletters and celebration assemblies.

Wishing everyone a restful weekend when it arrives,
Dr Craddock



Rights Respecting News

Article of the Week

This week, we are exploring, 'Article 24 – Health Care - ensures that every child has the right to the best possible health'.

Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

During our weekly assembly, we explored the question, 'Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Can you think of ways to keep yourself mentally healthy?'. Each tutor group shared a wide range of keeping ourselves mentally healthy, both at school and at home. Here are some answers:

- Understanding the different types of emotions you have.
- Knowing that everyone has emotions, both positive and negative.
- Knowing who to talk to if you are feeling unhappy or unsafe (Telling School ethos).
- Making sure you exercise regularly.
- Making sure you have a healthy diet.
- Limiting time on social media or other online platforms.
- Feeling safe, secure and respected.
- Health care – being able to see a doctor, nurse or counsellor if you need to.



West Moors Middle School, Heathfield Way, West Moors, Ferndown, Dorset. BH22 0DA

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As a school, we use 'Zumos', and their mission is to 'measurably improve world happiness!' In our tutor groups we start each day with 'How to be happy' audio clips. This is a powerful tool that delivers a simple mind technique which teaches coping strategies and builds strong character. The benefit of this is to build powerful self-confidence, resilience and wellbeing. After breaktime and lunchtime, we also visit the 'Chillroom' for mindfulness practice. This helps our children to learn how to become mindful, how to breathe correctly, how to relax, focus, reduce anxiety and stress. Each child has a log in for 'Zumos' where they can explore a range of activities

(<https://www.zumos.co.uk/>). Please encourage your child to login at home and use these tools to support their mental well-being.



E-Safety

All children need our help to stay safe online. There are some excellent resources to help parents and carers to teach their children to be #ShareAware with NSPCC and O2.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventingabuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/>



E-Safety Websites for parents

Parent Zone

<https://parentzone.org.uk/home>

NCA-CEOP

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Parent Zone and NCA-CEOP are fantastic websites and a great place for help and advice for families in a digital world. The both provide excellent support and guidance for parents from leading experts and organisations on a range of topics.



Eco Club

This week the school Eco Team collected apples and pears from the fruit trees at the front of our school premises. These boxes of fruit were then placed at the front entrance for families to help themselves. How many families will be baking fruit crumbles ?



School Improvement Priority **To further improve levels of punctuality and attendance**



This year, we continue to focus on securing regular attendance throughout the school. We are aiming for all children to strive towards 100% attendance. An attendance trophy is awarded again every month to the class in both key stages with the best attendance. The best class will also be highlighted in the Head teacher's newsletter.



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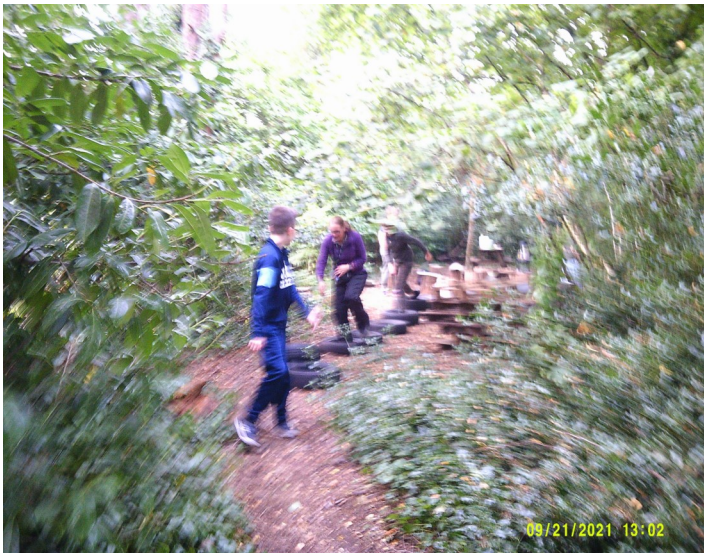


FUN AT FOREST SCHOOL

Year 6 – Who can run the obstacle course fastest?

Year 7 – Disappearing into the woods – to Capture the Flag.

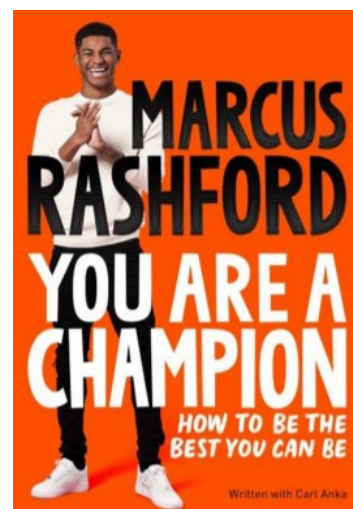
Year 8 – Heave ho! Here we go!



Mrs East's Book of the Week

You Are A Champion, by Marcus Rashford

Before he was a Manchester United and England footballer, and long before he started his inspiring campaign to end child food poverty, Marcus Rashford was just an average kid from Wythenshawe, South Manchester. Now, Marcus wants to show YOU how to achieve YOUR dreams, in this positive and inspiring guide for life. This book is packed full of stories from Marcus's own life and brilliant advice and top tips from performance psychologist Katie Warner. Look out for a copy in the school library.



SCHOOL GATES OPENING

AND CLOSING TIMES

Dropping off children at the start of the day.

Many children walk to school, which is good training and helps to develop road sense. If you bring them by car, please drop your children in a safe place near the school; and avoid stopping near the school entrances.

Please note that the **school gates open at 8-20am and close again at 8-35am promptly.** This is to ensure the school site is secure at the start of the school day. If your child is late for school, please enter via the school office and the office staff will mark your child as attending in the register. Thank you for your support in keeping all the children safe.



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Year 6 Humanities.

The children are extremely excited learning all about the Vikings and Anglo-Saxons, and have been thoroughly enjoying their history lessons. So far, they have explored where and why the Vikings came to Britain, who and how they invaded the country, and how the Anglo-Saxons were affected by this. This topic has caused an immense amount of discussion and debate. Please ask your child to share their learning with you at home. Today Y5 have been learning about the Battle of Hastings' and the Bayeux Tapestry .



Help is at hand for families struggling with utility bills

If you are having difficulties with the cost of energy bills, you may be eligible for a FREE fuel voucher from Citizens Advice to help pay for your utilities. For more details and to find local branch contact details visit the Citizens Advice website:

<https://edpcitizensadvice.org.uk/>



Communication

A reminder that at West Moors Middle School, we use our school website, email and our Twitter page to communicate and share information with you.

Email: office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk

School Website: <https://westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk>

Twitter page: https://twitter.com/west_moors

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WestMoorsMiddleSchool/>

Finally, please also look out for all key information to parents such as events information, newsletters, trips and special events using the parent mail system.



School Year: Term Dates & Holidays 2021/22

Autumn Term 2021

Term starts for students on Monday 6th September

Term ends on Friday 22nd October

Term starts for Students on Monday 1st November

Inset Day Friday 3rd December

Term ends Friday 17th December

Spring Term 2022:

Term starts for students on Tuesday 4th January

Inset Day Monday 31st January

Term ends on Friday 18th February

Term starts for students on Monday 28th February

Term ends for students on Friday 8th April

Summer Term 2022

Term starts for students on Monday 25th April

Bank Holiday: Monday 2nd May – school closed

Term ends on Friday 27th May

Term starts for students on Monday 6th June

Inset Day Friday 1st July

Term ends on Friday 22nd July

Inset Days:

Thursday 2nd September 2021

Friday 3rd September 2021

Friday 3rd December 2021

Monday 31st January 2022

Friday 1st July 2022



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TikTok is a video-sharing social media app which lets people create, view and download looping 15-second clips. Typically, these are videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to popular songs or soundbites (often for comic purposes), enhanced with filters, effects and text. Designed with young people in mind, TikTok skyrocketed in popularity in 2019 and has featured near the top of download charts ever since. It now has around 800 million active users worldwide.



What Parents & Carers Need to Know About



TIKTOK



AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Most videos appearing on a child's feed are light-hearted and amusing. However, some clips have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, themes of suicide and self-harm, or young teens acting in a sexually suggestive way. The sheer volume of uploads is impossible to moderate entirely – so it is possible for a child to be exposed to explicit and age-inappropriate content.



EXPLICIT SONGS

TikTok primarily revolves around videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to music. Inevitably, some featured songs will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the app's young user-base, there is a risk that children may view older users' videos and want to imitate any explicit language or suggestive actions.



TIKTOK FAME

The app has created its own celebrities: Charli D'Amelio and Lil Nas X, for example, were catapulted to fame by exposure on TikTok – leading to many more teens attempting to go viral and become "TikTok famous". While most aspiring stars hoping to be "the next big thing" will find it difficult, setbacks may in turn prompt them to go to even more drastic lengths to get noticed.



HAZARDOUS VISIBILITY

Connecting with others is simple on TikTok – including commenting on and reacting to users' videos, following their profile and downloading their content. The majority of these interactions are harmless, but – because of its abundance of teen users – TikTok has experienced problems with predators contacting young people.



ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like all social media, TikTok is designed to be addictive. It can be hugely entertaining – but that also makes it hard to put down. As well as the punchy nature of the short video format, the app's ability to keep you intrigued about what's coming next means it's easy for a 5-minute visit to turn into a 45-minute stay.



IN-APP PURCHASES

There's an in-app option to purchase "TikTok coins", which are then converted into digital rewards for sending to content creators that a user likes. Prices range from 30p to an eye-watering £30 bundle. Buying coins is now restricted to over-18s – but TikTok doesn't require users to verify their age on sign up, so a young person could easily access this feature if they were determined to.



Advice for Parents & Carers

TALK ABOUT ONLINE CONTENT

Assuming your child is above TikTok's age limit, talk to them about what they've viewed on the app. Ask their opinion on what's appropriate and what isn't. Explain why they shouldn't give out personal details or upload videos which reveal information like their school or home address. In the long run, teaching them to think critically about what they see on TikTok could help them to become social-media savvy.



MAINTAIN PRIVACY SETTINGS

In early 2021, TikTok changed the default setting for all under-18s' accounts to "private". Keeping it that way is the safest solution: it means only users who your child approves can watch their videos. The "Stitch" (which lets users splice clips from other people's videos into their own) and "Duet" (where you build on another user's content by recording your own video alongside their original) features are now only available to over-18s. This might clash with your child's ambitions of social media stardom, but it will fortify their account against predators.



LEARN ABOUT REPORTING AND BLOCKING

With the correct privacy settings applied, TikTok is a relatively safe space. However, in case something does slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report inappropriate content and get them to come to you about anything upsetting that they've seen. TikTok allows users to report anyone breaching its guidelines, while you can also block individual users through their profile.



ENABLE FAMILY SAFETY MODE

"Family Safety Mode" lets parents and carers link their own TikTok account to their child's. Through your mobile, you can control your child's safety settings remotely – including limiting screen time, managing their ability to exchange messages (and with whom) and blocking a lot of age-inappropriate content. TikTok refreshed its Safety Centre in May 2021, providing new resources for parents and carers to support online safety among families. These resources can be found on their website.



USE RESTRICTED MODE

In the app's "Digital Wellbeing" section, you can filter out inappropriate content (specific content creators or hashtags, for instance) using "Restricted Mode". This can then be locked with a PIN. You should note, though, that the algorithm moderating content isn't totally dependable – so it's wise to stay aware of what your child is watching.



MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child to manage their time on it in the "Digital Wellbeing" section. Under "Screen Time Management", you can limit the daily permitted time on the app (in increments ranging from 45 minutes to two hours). This preference can also be locked behind a PIN. That way, your child can get their regular dose of TikTok without wasting the whole day.



Meet our expert

Parveen Raza is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media areas and is the founder of Kids N Clicks, a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.

