



Barnsole Bulletin

TERM 4 | WEEK 6 | Friday 3rd April 2026



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Dear Parents & Carers,

As we start the Easter holidays tomorrow, many of us will be thinking about chocolate! But have you ever wondered why we give chocolate eggs and Easter bunnies in the first place? The egg has long been a symbol of new life and rebirth, which links closely to the Christian celebration of Easter and the story of new beginnings. Hundreds of years ago, people would decorate real eggs to celebrate the season. Chocolate eggs only became popular in the 19th century, when chocolate-making techniques improved and sweet treats became more widely available. Today, they are a much-loved part of Easter celebrations! The Easter bunny may seem a little mysterious, but it also has roots in ancient traditions. Rabbits are known for having lots of babies, so they became a symbol of fertility and new life in springtime. Over time, stories developed of a magical hare or rabbit delivering eggs—something children still enjoy imagining today. Around the world, Easter is celebrated in many different and fascinating ways. In Ghana and Nigeria, for example, Easter is a important time for Christian communities. Families often attend special church services, wear bright and colourful clothing, and gather together to share meals. Music, singing, and dancing are central to celebrations, creating a real sense of community and happiness. Whether you celebrate with chocolate, traditions, or simply time together, the Easter break is a great opportunity to enjoy the arrival of warmer weather and having time together with friends and family.



Best wishes,

Mr J Smales

Headteacher

House Points (Overall Total for the Academic Year)



4291

Invicta

4382

Medway

2766

Gordon

3056

Adams





If you have concerns about a child in school, please contact one of the Safeguarding team:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mr Smales (Headteacher)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Kramer (Deputy Headteacher)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Barber (Assistant Headteacher)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ms Tollervey (Assistant Headteacher)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Kagan (FLO)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ms Rixon (Office Manager)

If you are concerned about a child outside of school, either after school, at the weekends or during a school holiday, you can contact the following to report your concerns:

Helpful Contact Numbers

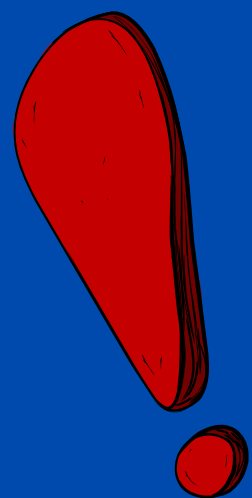
Medway Children Services – 01634 334466

Out of Hours Duty Team Medway – 03000 419191

NSPC – 0800 800 500

Police – 101

[Medway.gov.uk/mscb/](https://www.medway.gov.uk/mscb/)



Nursery

Nursery finished this term's topic off with a visit from Dino Girl, where we had a hands-on experience studying dinosaurs and got to meet Maxy the T-Rex!



Year R

Year R loved meeting Dino Girl and her friends! We got to have our picture taken with a dinosaur, dig for fossils and Maxy the dinosaur came to see us in class!



Reception Welly Wednesday.



Year 1

In Year 1, children learnt about weight, capacity and volume by getting stuck into practical activities. They compared objects using words like "heavier," "lighter," "full," and "empty," and used simple resources like cubes, cups and containers to measure and explore. Through hands-on tasks such as filling, pouring and balancing, they have started to build a clear understanding of these ideas in a fun and engaging way. In Design Technology, the children designed and made their own taxis. They learnt about different parts like the chassis, axles and wheels, and how these help the vehicle move. They then built their models using a range of materials, tested them out, and spoke about what worked well and what they might change next time.



Year 2

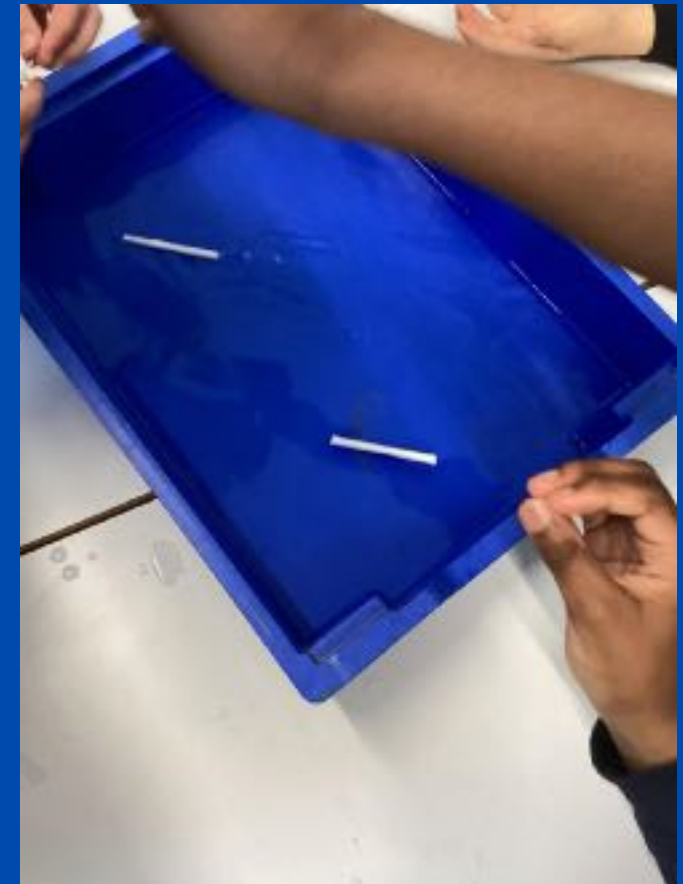
Over the past few weeks, children in Year 2 have designed their own beach huts using cardboard. They tested different joining and strengthening methods to ensure their structures were sturdy. After careful planning, they proceeded to make and paint their own beach huts, showcasing their artistic flair and engineering skills. It has been wonderful to see their enthusiasm and teamwork throughout this project.



Year 3

In Year 3, we have continued to improve our skills in playing the ukulele. We particularly enjoyed the song 'Roar' by Katy Perry.

In Science, we have learnt about contact forces involving friction and explored non-contact forces by using magnets. We even tried making our own compass using just a paper clip, straw, water, tray and a magnet. This would then show us which way was north!



Year 4

Last week, Year 4 had the privilege of visiting Sevenoaks Nature Reserve, where they took part in a range of engaging workshops linked to their topic Misty Mountains and Winding Rivers.

During the visit, the children explored different ecosystems and discovered the creatures living in ponds and rivers through an exciting pond-dipping activity. They also investigated the diet of owls by carefully dissecting owl pellets, using word mats to help them identify the animals found inside — we even discovered a rat's head in one pellet!

The children learned a great deal about a variety of habitats and impressed the staff at the reserve with their enthusiasm and excellent effort.

Well done, Year 4!



Year 5

Year 5 had a fantastic trip to Brogdale Farm to conclude our geography topic this term on "Sow, Grow and Farm." The children explored the orchards, learning about how fruit is grown, cared for and harvested throughout the seasons.

They enjoyed hands-on activities, including planting and identifying different crops, which helped bring their classroom learning to life. It was a fun, engaging and educational day, and the children returned with a greater understanding of where our food comes from.



Year 6

Year 6 have reached the end of their exciting art unit, "Bees, Beetles and Butterflies." Throughout the project, pupils were given the freedom to choose both the creature they wished to represent and the artistic style they wanted to explore. This led to a wonderful range of outcomes, from bold pop art pieces to detailed sketches and delicate watercolour paintings using carefully mixed tints, tones and shades.

It has been fantastic to see such creativity on display, with some children even designing imaginative hybrid insects. Their work showcased a thoughtful use of symmetry, colour, shape and pattern, resulting in a vibrant and diverse collection of artwork. Well done, Year 6, for your creativity and enthusiasm!



A huge thank you to Friends of Barnsole for generously providing our brand-new sports kit for upcoming competitions!

We're especially excited for our next event — the much-anticipated Tag Rugby Mini Youth Games this May.

Barnsole will not only be playing sharp but looking sharp too!



Visit to Pembroke House Naval Home

On Monday 23rd March, 26 children from Year 5 sang some songs that they had learnt with Mrs Robert's from Rochester Cathedral. The children sang beautifully and were indeed a credit to our school. After their performance they had chance to chat with the residents about their time in the forces. We have already been invited back which I know the children will enjoy.



Pupil Achievement – Belle Year 5

Belle in Year 5 competed in the IGA National gymnastics competition Sunday 22nd March and placed Bronze on Vault.



TIME TO PLAY!



Maritime
Strong
Foundations

Come and join in our
weekly stay and play session at
Barnsole Primary School!

Looking for something fun to do with your little one? Join us for a relaxed and engaging session of songs, rhymes and early learning activities for under 4s. Led by a qualified nursery teacher, these sessions are open to everyone in the community and are a lovely way to learn, play and connect.

Starting on
Thursday 23rd April
and every Thursday
Morning thereafter



Location:
Key Stage 1 Hall,
entrance by
Neptune Class

FREE



Barnsole Primary School
Barnsole Road
Gillingham
ME7 2JG
01634 333400



Barnsole Food Bank

Our foodbank is here to support members of our school community who may be finding things a little difficult. We know that a sudden drop in finances can happen to any of us, at any time, and for many different reasons. Our community looks after one another. Support is here whenever you need it.



Food Bank Q&As



Who is the food bank for?

Our food bank is for anyone in our school community who needs a little extra support.

Do I have to use it every week?

No. You can contact us whenever you need support. Some people may need help once, others may need it more than once, there is no judgement and no obligation.

Do you only provide food?

No, we also have hygiene items available, such as toiletries and other everyday essentials.

How do I access the food bank?

You can email the food bank directly or speak in confidence to Michelle, Mel or Frankie. All conversations will be handled sensitively and discreetly.

Contact



foodbank@barnsole-maritime.org



Michelle

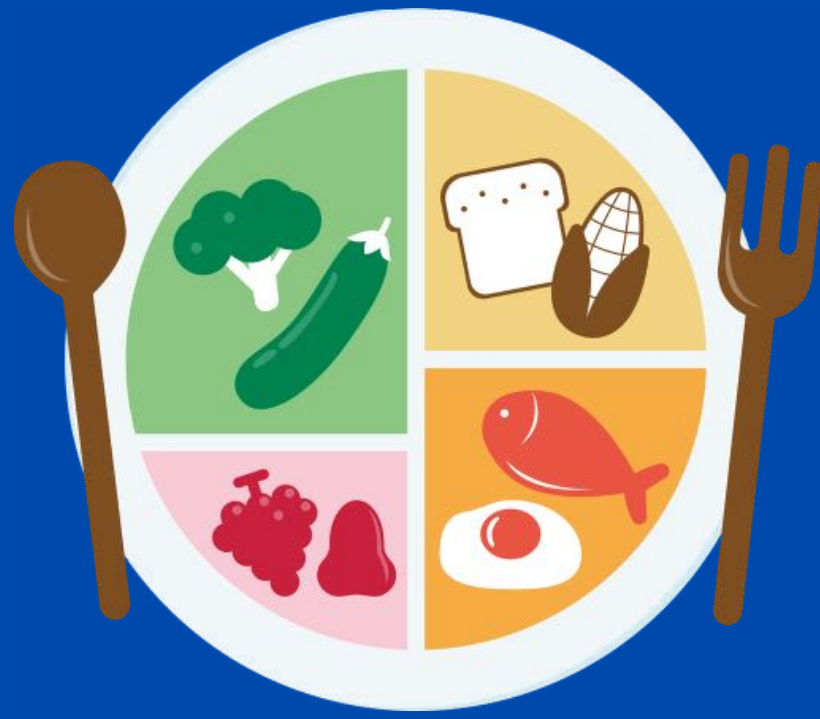


Mel



Frankie

HEALTHY LUNCHBOX TIPS FOR PARENTS



Providing a balanced lunch helps children stay focused, energetic, and ready to learn throughout the school day. When packing your child's lunchbox, try to aim to include a variety of foods from the main food groups to support their growth and wellbeing. There is also the option of ordering a free hot meal each day for your child in Reception and KS1 or a paid hot meal in KS2.

What a Balanced Lunchbox Looks Like:

- Starchy Foods

These give children the energy they need to learn and play. Good options include wholemeal bread or rolls, wraps, rice, pasta, or crackers.

- Protein

Protein supports growth and keeps children feeling full for longer. Try lean meats, eggs, hummus, tofu, beans, or cheese.

- Dairy or Dairy Alternatives

These foods help support strong bones and teeth. Include plain or low-sugar yoghurt, cheese, or plant-based alternatives where appropriate.

- Fruit and Vegetables

Aim for at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables each day. Fresh, chopped options all count.

- A Healthy Drink

Water is the best choice for staying hydrated. Please avoid sugary drinks.

A lunchbox that includes a mix of these foods helps children get the nutrients they need to thrive at school. Thank you for supporting healthy eating habits at home and at school!

IMPORTANT UNIFORM REMINDER



PE Days

On allocated PE Days, children expected to wear the correct PE kit.

This consists of:

- House colour t-shirt
- Dark blue joggers or shorts
- School jumper or cardigan
- Plain white t-shirt if they do not yet have their house t-shirt.

Jewellery

Earrings must be small studs only. Hoops and larger decorative earrings (including character earrings) are not permitted. This is a health and safety requirement and school expectation.

School Uniform

School uniform footwear should be black shoes or all black trainers. White, pink or other coloured trainers are not in line with our uniform expectations.

NO SMOKING OR VAPING POLICY



Please note that there is a no smoking/vaping on the school site. This includes outside areas, such as the playground, car park and outside the school gates.





Class Attendance for the year so far ...

Infants

Saturn - 95%
Neptune - 94%
Mercury - 94%
Mars - 93%
Comet - 92%
Venus - 91%
Jupiter - 90%
Moonbeams - 90%



Juniors

Polaris - 97%
Oberon - 96%
Apollo - 95%
Titan - 95%
Icarus - 95%
Phoenix - 95%
Aquarius - 94%
Dragon - 94%
Juno - 93%
Pegasus - 93%
Capricorn - 91%
Orion - 90%
Aquila - 89%

FRIENDS OF BARNSOLE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



2026

MARCH



05/03 : CommuniTea
12/03 : Mothers Day
Shop

APRIL



02/04 : CommuniTea
23/04: Bake Sale

MAY



Class tea towel
07/05 : CommuniTea

JUNE



11/06 : CommuniTea
18/06: Fathers Day
Shop
26/06: Donation non
uniform day - revised
date

JULY



01/07: Summer Fair -
Revised date
09/07 : CommuniTea
10/07: Inflatables
afternoon - Revised
date

CommuniTea

Join us for a relaxed tea & coffee
morning once a month right after
drop-off.

A chance to meet, chat and
connect with other parents in our
school community.

Babies and pre-school children
are very welcome.

If you can bring a mug, that would
be great!

We'd love to see you there!

Thursday 2nd April

Thursday 7th May

Thursday 11th June

Thursday 9th July

Free to attend!



STAY UP TO DATE WITH ALL EVENT DETAILS ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



facebook.com/friendsbarnsole



friends@barnsole-maritime.org

Dates for the Diary

Friday 3 rd April-Friday 17 th April	Easter Holidays
Monday 20 th April	SCHOOL RETURNS
Thursday 23 rd April	Bake Sale
Monday 4 th May	May Bank Holiday
Thursday 7 th May	CommuniTea - Join us to meet, chat and connect with other parents in our school community (younger children welcome) (9am-10am) KS1 Hall
Monday 11 th May-Thursday 14 th May	Yr 6 SATs Week
Monday 25 th May-Friday 29 th May	May Half Term
Monday 1 st June	School Returns
Thursday 11th June	CommuniTea - Join us to meet, chat and connect with other parents in our school community (younger children welcome) (9am-10am) KS1 Hall
Thursday 18 th June	Fathers Day Shop
Friday 26th June	Summer Fair Donation non uniform day
Wednesday 1 st July	Summer Fair
Thursday 9 th July	CommuniTea - Join us to meet, chat and connect with other parents in our school community (younger children welcome) (9am-10am) KS1 Hall
Friday 10 th July	Inflatables afternoon - more details to follow
Tuesday 21 st July	End of School Year



April 2026 Timetable

All regular sessions delivered live online via zoom, 90 minutes long
£24 each or FREE with School Membership
 Book online at facefamilyadvice.co.uk
 Recordings available for 48 hours

Understanding Anger	6 April 10am
School Anxiety	6 April 7pm
Facing Defiance	7 April 10am
Supporting Healthy Screen Use	7 April 7pm
Anxiety Explained	13 April 10am
Cannabis and Ketamine Awareness	13 April 7pm
Introduction to OCD	14 April 10am
What is ACT?	14 April 7pm
Decreasing Depression	20 April 10am
Raising Self-Esteem	20 April 7pm
Understanding the Teenage Brain	21 April 10am
Supporting Healthy Sleep	21 April 7pm
FREE Decreasing Depression	23 April 7-8pm
Improving Family Communication	27 April 10am
Autism: Improving Communication	27 April 7pm
Supporting a Child with ADHD	28 April 10am
Understanding Addictive Behaviour	28 April 7pm



Are you looking for before and after school childcare that works for you?

Wraparound childcare is childcare that wraps around the school day. It typically runs from 8am-6pm during term time, either on a school site or another local setting.

- ✓ Safe and supportive environments
- ✓ Fun, engaging activities
- ✓ Convenient local locations
- ✓ Affordable sessions paid directly to your school
- ✓ Financial support available in some cases



Find out more

Find the support you need as a busy parent or carer of a primary school age child.

Visit: Medway.gov.uk/WraparoundChildcare or speak to your child's school.



MEDWAY LIBRARIES

Gillingham Library Children's Events

Baby Bounce & Rhyme
Wednesday
10.45am to 11.15am

Toddler Shake & Boogie
Tuesday
10.45am to 11.15am

Lego Club
Saturday
12.15pm to 3.45pm

Pop in & Play
Saturday
9.30am to 3.30pm

Teen Crochet Club
Fortnightly Saturdays
10.30am to 11.30am

Messy Play
Thursday
10.30am to 11.30am

For more information: visit www.medway.gov.uk/libraries or speak to a member of staff



AVAILABLE HELP FOR WRAPAROUND CHILDCARE

Up to 85% of costs can be claimed through Universal Credit

WHY THIS MATTERS

Wraparound Childcare - such as breakfast clubs and after-school care helps parents manage work and family life. If you receive Universal Credit, you may be eligible for significant financial support.

THE BENEFITS ARE

- Claim up to 85% of childcare costs when using Ofsted registered providers
- Payments are made directly to you after costs are incurred

HOW TO APPLY

1. Log in to your Universal Credit account
2. Submit evidence of childcare costs (invoices or receipts)
3. Receive reimbursement after payment

MedwayGo offers Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) for school aged children during the main school holidays. Activities are free for those eligible for benefit related free school meals, as well as children with SEND and children in care for more information use the following link: <https://go.medway.gov.uk/>

TAX-FREE CHILDCARE CAN ALSO BE USED FOR WRAPAROUND CHILDCARE

- Get £2 from the government for every £8 you pay into your childcare account
- Up to £2,000 per child (or £4,000 if your child is disabled)

NEED HELP?

Visit:
www.gov.uk/universal-credit
www.gov.uk/tax-freechildcare
<https://beststartinlife.org.uk>
 Don't miss out - access available & affordable childcare today

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about INSTAGRAM

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Instagram is a highly popular social media platform owned by Meta. It allows users to share photos and videos, post stories, send private messages, go live, explore public content, and interact with others worldwide. As a user-generated platform widely accessed in the UK, Instagram is directly affected by the Online Safety Act 2023, which places legal duties on platforms to better protect children from harm.

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

ADDICTIVE DESIGN

Instagram is designed to encourage prolonged engagement through endless scrolling, personalised recommendations, and social feedback such as 'likes' and comments. Young people may feel pressure to constantly check updates in case they miss out. Even with new regulatory duties, children can still lose track of time, affecting sleep, homework, and real-world relationships.

SCHEDULED AND DIRECT MESSAGES

Instagram allows users to schedule direct messages. While convenient, this can result in messages arriving late at night or early in the morning, disrupting sleep and increasing anxiety. Although UK regulation requires stronger protections against stranger contact, risks remain if children accept unknown followers or move conversations across platforms.

LIVESTREAMING AND PUBLIC EXPOSURE

'Going Live' enables real-time interaction with followers. If an account is public, broadcasts can potentially be viewed more widely, increasing exposure. Although under-16s face tighter restrictions and may require parental permission to use live features, livestreaming still carries risks, including inappropriate comments, pressure to perform, and unwanted contact.

THREADS AND PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS

'Threads' is Instagram's linked, text-based platform, where posts can appear within the Instagram environment. It encourages participation in public conversations that may involve strangers. While parental controls may carry across, children can still encounter misinformation, hostile exchanges, or inappropriate content, particularly in trending or viral discussions.

META AI AND BLURRED BOUNDARIES

Instagram includes Meta AI chat features, allowing users to ask questions and receive responses. Young people may access inaccurate or unsuitable information, or begin to treat AI as a trusted companion. Although platforms are expected to reduce harmful outputs under UK law, AI systems can still provide misleading information and are not a substitute for real relationships.

EXCLUSION AND SOCIAL PRESSURE

Instagram centres around visibility and social approval. Not being tagged, receiving fewer likes, or being excluded from group chats can deeply affect a young person's sense of belonging. Even with the regulatory changes limiting harmful content and stranger messaging, peer comparison and online social hierarchies continue to impact young people's self-esteem and emotional wellbeing.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE TEEN ACCOUNT PROTECTIONS

Ensure children sign up with their real age. Instagram's 'Teen Accounts' provide default private profiles for under-16s, restrict who can message them, and apply stronger content controls. Review messaging settings, nudity protection features, and live permissions together. Remember that safeguards are helpful but not foolproof, and regular review is essential.

TALK ABOUT THE LAW AND SAFETY

Discuss how the Online Safety Act is designed to protect children, while explaining that no system removes all risk. Help young people understand why age verification, private accounts, and restricted messaging matter. Encourage them to question content, report concerns, and recognise that platforms have legal duties but families and schools still play a key role.

Meet Our Expert

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

SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Use Instagram's activity dashboard and built-in time management tools to agree daily limits. Consider device-free times, particularly before bed, to protect sleep. Scheduled messages and constant notifications can interrupt rest, so explore notification controls together and encourage balanced offline activities to reduce dependency.

KEEP COMMUNICATION OPEN

Create an environment where children feel comfortable discussing what they see or experience online. Talk about influencers, filters, AI chatbots, and online friendships – without judgement. Reinforce that AI tools are not real friends and that privacy matters. A calm, ongoing dialogue is far more effective than reacting only when problems arise.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about LIVE STREAMING

Live streaming involves broadcasting and watching videos online in real time, often on social media or via platforms like YouTube and Twitch. Viewers can interact through comments, chats and reactions during the broadcast: such instant engagement makes this an exciting way to share experiences, learn from others and build digital communities. Despite the many positives, live streaming also creates a potential platform for unsuitable content and poses some risks to children: it's essential to keep privacy and safety in mind and comply with each site or app's age restrictions.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

LACK OF AGE VERIFICATION

Despite their age restrictions, some platforms don't require proof of age at sign up – meaning that anyone can register for an account (and potentially pretend to be older or younger than they actually are). In many cases, this means that young live streamers can never be totally certain exactly who they are broadcasting to and who is engaging with their live stream.

DISCLOSING PERSONAL INFO

A characteristic of live streaming is the ability for videos to be instantly shared worldwide. Without the correct privacy settings enabled, a child could inadvertently reveal personal information or their location, making them vulnerable to online predators or identity theft. It's wise to regularly check the privacy settings (and what data is being shared) on any apps your child has signed up for.

ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN

As the video streams are live, children might encounter (or inadvertently share) inappropriate content. Most live-streaming apps have rules to prevent this and monitor their services, also providing report buttons where content can be flagged for review. It may not be dealt with instantly, however, meaning that your child could be further exposed to harmful content during a live stream.

UNAUTHORISED RECORDINGS

Each live streaming platform stores completed videos for different periods (Twitch saves broadcasts for 60 days, for example, while Facebook and YouTube remove them only at the creator's request). Deleting a video, though, doesn't always stop it from being shared: in some cases, streams have been illegally recorded (or screenshots taken) by certain viewers and redistributed on other sites.

ROGUE CONTENT CREATORS

Children can also watch other people's live streams, which could potentially contain *anything* at any time (such as nudity, drug use or profanity). Most apps claim to monitor live streams and will stop any that don't adhere to their guidelines – but with millions of streams per day, it's complicated to regulate them *all*, so children could be exposed to inappropriate content without parents knowing.

DANGER OF GROOMING

There are increasing reports of children being coerced into performing "suggestive acts" by strangers on some live-streaming apps. Due to the lack of verification required for certain apps, almost anyone can sign up to these services (including anonymously or under a fake identity). It's vital, therefore, to ensure the correct safety measures are in place before your child begins live streaming.

Advice for Parents & Carers

PUT PRIVACY FIRST

Through the streaming app's settings, switch your child's account to 'private', so only their friends and followers can see their broadcasts. You could also turn off the live chat, shielding your child from any upsetting comments – although viewers' feedback is often seen as an integral part of the fun. Identify any nearby items (such as school uniforms or visible landmarks) that could give away your child's location.

MANAGE MULTISTREAMING

Some apps and sites let users stream their content through multiple social media platforms at once. A broadcast on SteamYard, for example, can be shared on YouTube, Twitch, X and Facebook if the accounts are linked. The privacy settings can differ on each of these, so we'd suggest only streaming via one platform at a time to maintain greater control over who's watching your child's videos.

GET INVOLVED YOURSELF

Research suggests a significant number of streams show a child on their own, often in a supposed safe space like their bedroom. If your child wants to live stream, ask if you could be present because you're interested in how it works. You could even set up your own account to gain a more detailed knowledge of what your child talks about in their live streams – and who they're broadcasting to.

TALK ABOUT LIVE STREAMING

Try to start with positives before discussing potential risks. You could ask which live streaming apps your child likes and how they use them. Do they just watch streams or create their own? Explain why it's unwise to reveal personal information while streaming (even to friends). If you feel your child's too young for live streams, explain your reasoning to them and perhaps agree to review this decision in the future.

CONSIDER THEIR ONLINE REPUTATION

As the broadcasts are live, it often causes the misconception among young people that whatever happens in their video simply 'vanishes' once the stream ends. However, videos can stay online indefinitely or be recorded by other users. It's important that your child understands what they do and say in a live stream could potentially damage their online reputation and, quite possibly, be seen by prospective future employers, colleges or universities.

Meet Our Expert

Rhodri Smith is Head of Digital Learning at Thomas's Kensington, London. Recognised in the EdTech 50 UK Awards Yearbook 2021/22 for his efforts in the digital transformation at Cubitt Town Primary School and Tower Hamlets, he is also a Google for Education Certified Trainer and guest lectures at University College London on the integration of technology across the curriculum.



National
Online
Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

Source: <https://www.iwf.org.uk/media/23jj3nc2/distribution-of-captures-of-live-streamed-child-sexual-abuse-final.pdf>