



Barnsole Bulletin

TERM 3 | WEEK 2 | Friday 16th January 2026



Content

- Message from Mr Smales
- House Points
- Safeguarding
- Nursery
- Year R
- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6
- Well Done!
- National Year of Reading!
- Healthy lunchbox tips for parents!
- Reminder: Clothing Bank
- Parent information
- Friends of Barnsole Events e
- Friends of Barnsole Disco
- Attendance
- Dates for the Diary
- Safeguarding Tips

Dear Parents & Carers,

This week I would like to shine a light on the British Values that sit at the heart of school life at Barnsole Primary. These values are: Democracy; the Rule of Law; Individual Liberty; and Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. They help our children grow into thoughtful, responsible individuals who can contribute positively to our community in Gillingham and beyond. A key focus for us is Democracy and the Rule of Law. One important way we promote democracy is through our House Captain elections at the start of each academic year. Year 6 pupils who wish to represent their house put themselves forward and share their ideas through a manifesto. The whole school listens carefully, asks questions, and then takes part in a secret ballot. Every child has one vote, and every vote counts. It is a real example of fairness, voice and responsibility. The Rule of Law is also reinforced every day through clear expectations and consistent routines. From classroom charters to playground rules, children learn that rules help everyone feel safe, respected and ready to learn. On Wednesday our eight House Captains and Deputies travelled by train to Westminster for a tour of the Houses of Parliament. The children learnt first-hand how laws are made and how democracy works in practice. They were able to go inside the House of Lords, and although they couldn't enter the House of Commons because Prime Minister's Questions was taking place, they did see many MPs going about their business. As always, our Year 6 House Captains and Deputies showed impeccable behaviour throughout the visit and were a credit to themselves, their families and Barnsole. We are proud of the way they represented our school.



Best wishes,

Mr Smales

House Points (Overall Total for the Academic Year)



766

Invicta

940

Medway

784

Gordon

768

Adams

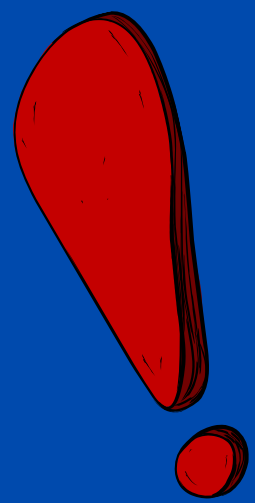




If you have concerns about a child in school, please contact one of the Safeguarding team:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jonathan Smales (Headteacher)
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Liz Kramer (Deputy Headteacher)
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Nicole Barber (Assistant Headteacher)
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Stephanie Tollervey (Assistant Headteacher)
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Michelle Kagan (FLO)
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Helen 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 414141
NSPC – 0800 800 500
Police – 101
[Medway.gov.uk/mscb/](https://www.medway.gov.uk/mscb/)

Nursery

One of the boys in nursery wanted to play Pac-Man. We set up this fine motor activity for the children's grip. It was very popular amongst the children.



Year R

We were so excited to find our dinosaurs had been frozen by the cold weather last week! We investigated using different tools to break the ice to free them. We have also been working really hard in our Phonics – we love practising our tricky words.



Year 1

During our recent lessons, the Year One have been busy learning and exploring across different areas of the curriculum. In maths, they have been consolidating their understanding of numbers to 20 through practical activities and games that build confidence and fluency. In Music, the children have enjoyed listening to a wide range of musical styles by composers from around the world, discovering how music can sound different across cultures. They shared their thoughts and ideas through thoughtful discussions, then expressed their feelings creatively by drawing pictures inspired by how the music made them feel. It has been a wonderful start back to the new term.



Year 2

Year 2 have had a fantastic start to the year in their Maths lessons, focusing on 3D shapes. They have shown great enthusiasm in learning the correct vocabulary associated with shapes, including faces, edges, and sides. They have explored these properties and used them for sorting the 3D shapes under their own headings. They have also begun to explore the faces of these shapes for pattern-making activities, which has sparked their creativity, particularly when thinking about symmetrical patterns.



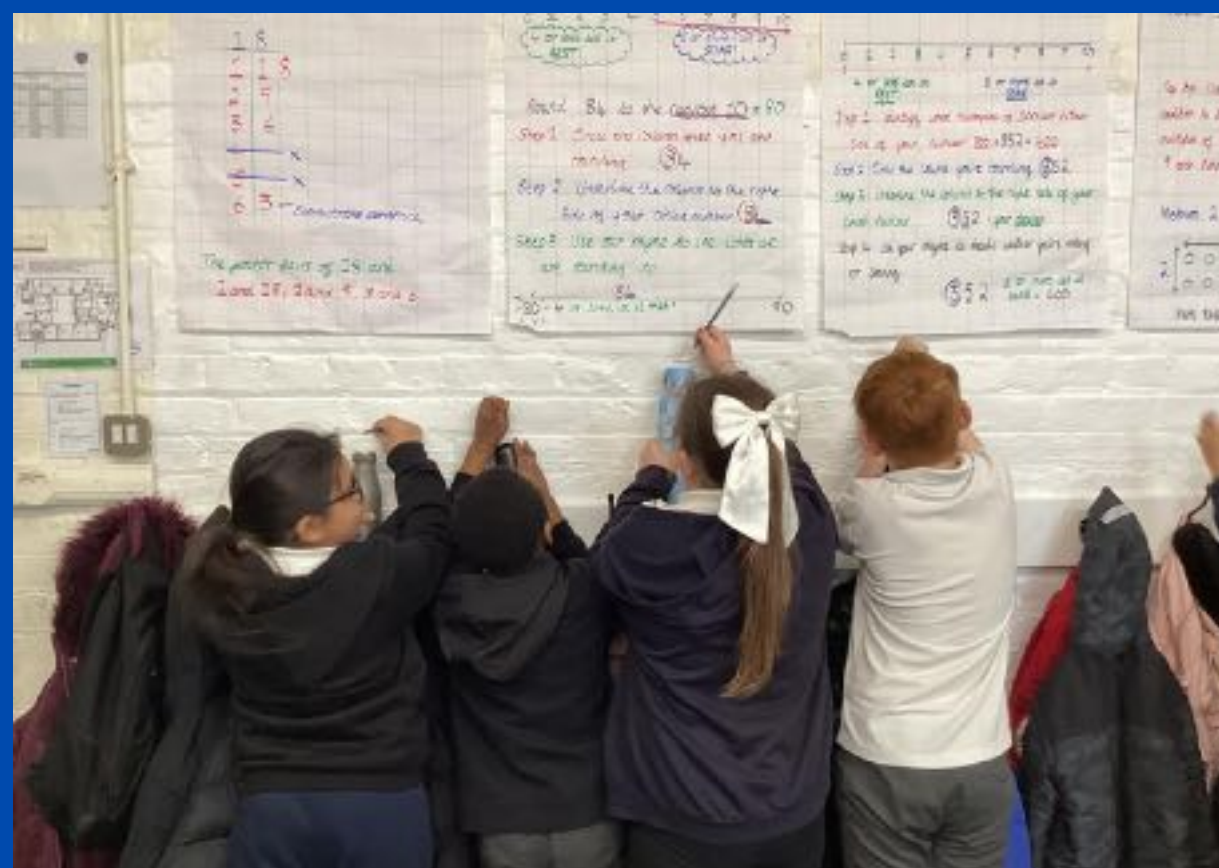
Year 3

Year 3 have been enthusiastically exploring rhythm and sound during their music lesson, using djembe drums. The children worked together to create and maintain steady beats, listening carefully to one another and developing their sense of timing and coordination. Through this hands-on experience, the children built confidence, teamwork and an appreciation for music from different cultures. It was wonderful to see their focus, creativity and enjoyment as they learned through making music together.



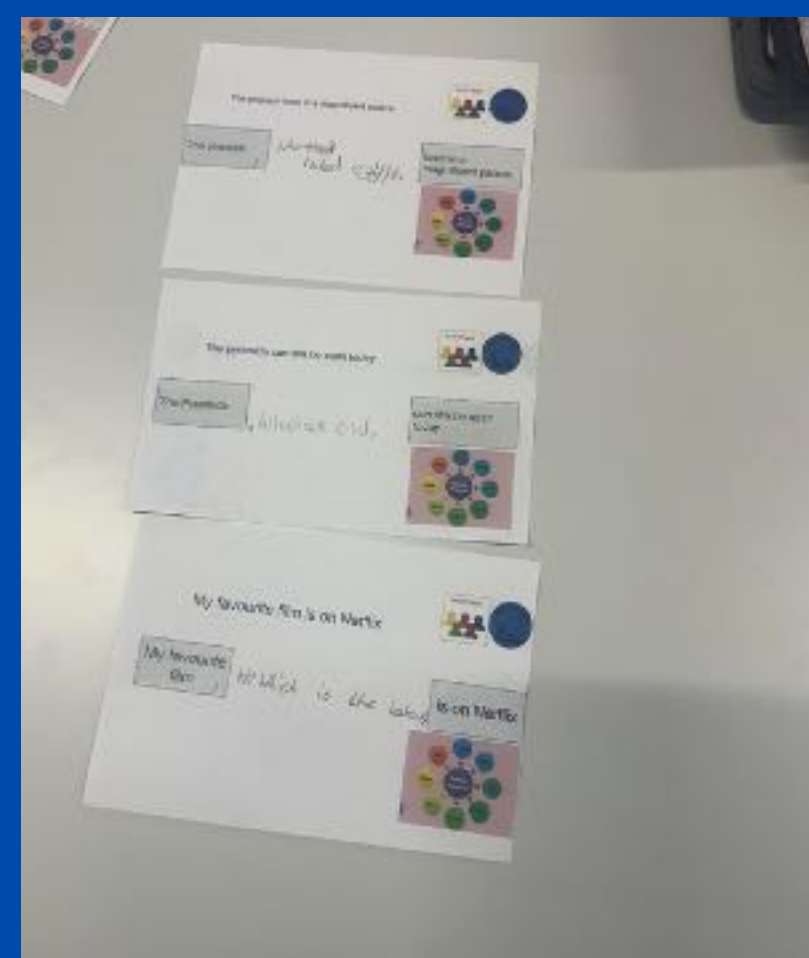
Year 4

This week, Year 4 embarked on an exciting adventure immersion to bring their storytelling to life. They were challenged to think quickly and work together as they battled through a fierce snowstorm, carefully navigated an icy, rocky path, discovered water at the peak of a mountain, and heroically rescued someone trapped in the snow. These thrilling experiences will help inspire their own adventure stories, and we cannot wait to read what they create next!



Year 5

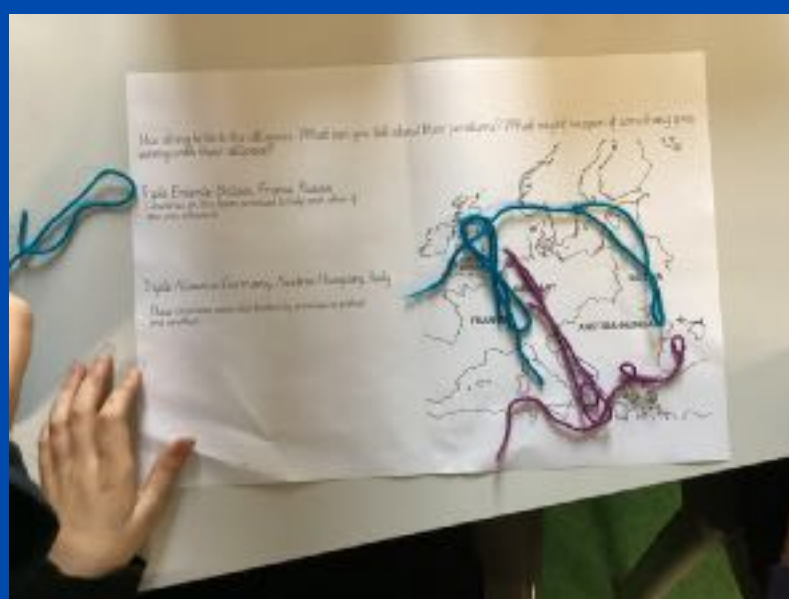
Year 5 have been exploring relative clauses in English this week, learning how to add extra information to their sentences using words such as who, which and that. Pupils have enjoyed experimenting with different sentence structures and discovering how these clauses can make their writing clearer and more exciting. From describing characters in stories to explaining ideas in non-fiction, they have been practising their new skills across a range of activities. The class are already showing great confidence, and their writing is becoming more detailed and engaging as a result.



Year 6

Year 6 have had a fantastic start to their new topics this term! In History, the focus is on Britain at War, and the class enjoyed a hands-on lesson exploring the start of World War I. They used cubes to compare the sizes of the armies involved, used string on a world map to trace the countries in each alliance and came up with actions to help us remember the five main causes of the war. In Science, the topic of Light has sparked curiosity, with pupils working practically to investigate how light travels. We used torches and card to prove that it travels in straight lines.

We can't wait to share more with you as these topics develop.



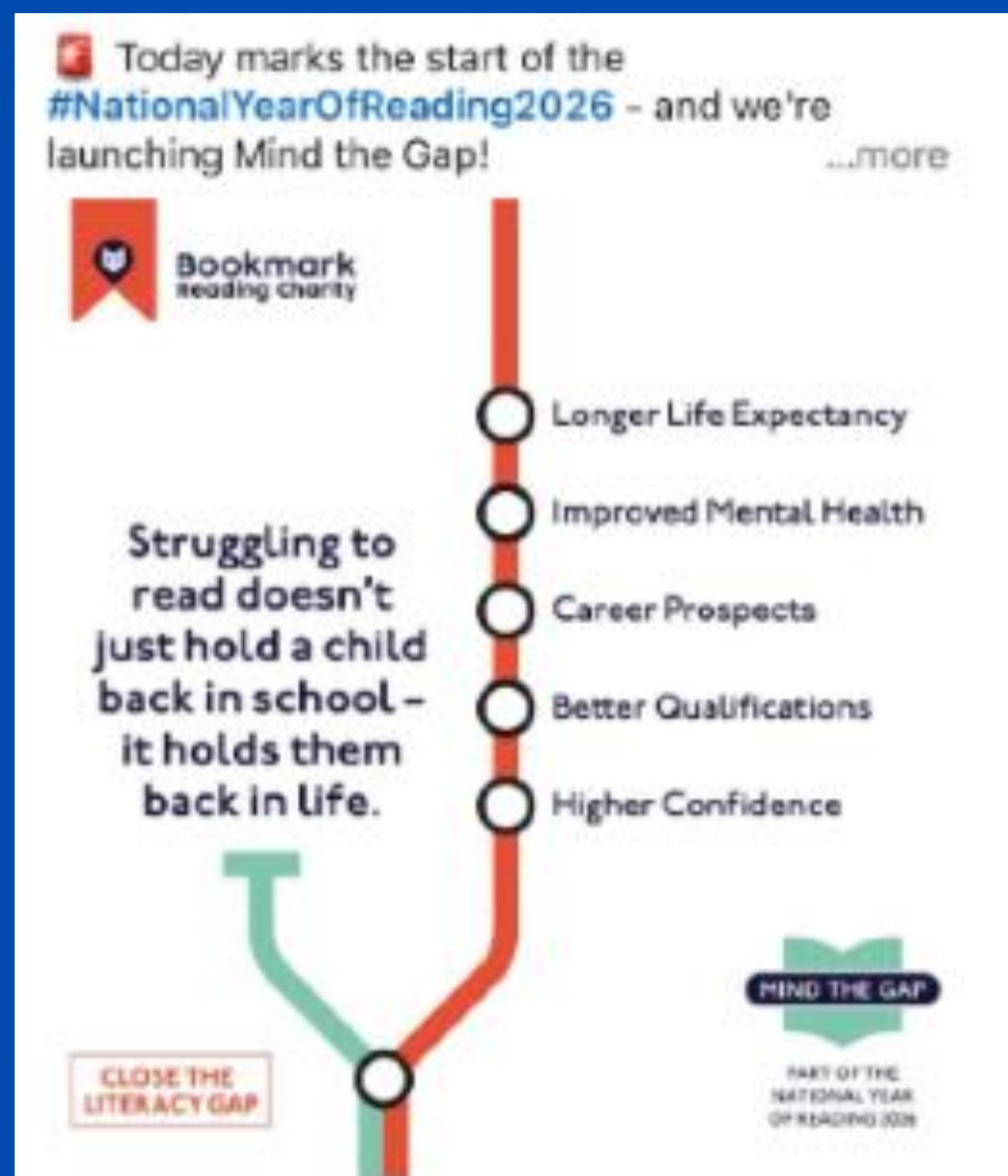
Well Done!

On 8th January five Barnsole girls completed their Brownie Promise last night with the 14th Gillingham Brownies. They are so proud of their achievement and journey ahead with Girl Guiding.

Margot, Ava and Tia – Oberon
Sienna – Saturn
Eliza – Juno



It is the National Year of Reading this year!



Reading is one of the most important skills children develop during their primary school years. We encourage all children to read a little every day, or as often as possible, both at school and at home. Even short, regular reading sessions can make a lasting difference.

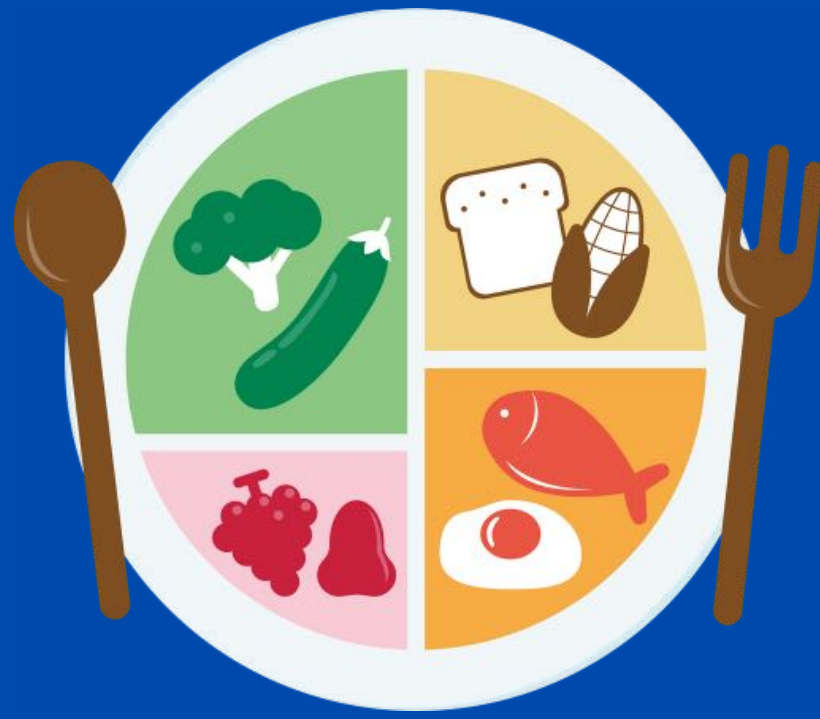
Developing a love of reading takes children on incredible journeys, sparking imagination, curiosity and enjoyment. Just as importantly, research shows that regular reading supports children in many other ways. It can improve mental wellbeing, build confidence, strengthen vocabulary and communication skills, and support success across the whole curriculum.

The benefits of reading extend far beyond the classroom. Children who read regularly are more likely to achieve better qualifications, enjoy wider career opportunities and feel confident expressing themselves as they grow older. Reading helps children understand the world around them and develop empathy, resilience and independence.

Struggling to read does not only hold children back at school – it can hold them back in life. That is why early support, encouragement and positive reading habits are so important. By sharing books, talking about stories and making time to read every day, we can work together to give our children the very best start.

Thank you to all parents and carers for the time, effort and support you give to helping your children read. Your encouragement at home plays a vital role in developing confident, enthusiastic readers.

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!

REMINDER: CLOTHING BANK

This is just a reminder that our clothing bank is located on our Junior Site near the front office.

If you have any used or unwanted clothing at home, you can place it in the clothing bank. Not only does this provide a simple way to recycle items and support the environment, but the school will also receive a small amount of money for every kilogram of clothing collected. This will go directly towards supporting our children and school community.

If your local charity shop is not accepting clothing please feel free to use the clothing banks provided.



Parent Information – Uniform Reminder



School Uniform

Please can we remind parents of our school uniform policy. Please take the time to read this on our school website.

Jewellery & Hair Accessories

Earrings – plain Studs only

Hair bands or hair ties should be plain colours and small

No necklaces, bracelets or any other item of jewellery is allowed

Items of Religious Significance

Children from the Sikh community are allowed to wear a kara, which is a steel or iron bracelet. As part of the Sikh faith, the kara must not be removed.

Head coverings (hijab) should be plain navy blue or black without any embellishments, patterns or additional decorations.

PE Days

For PE Days, children should be wearing black shorts, leggings or tracksuit bottoms. T-shirt in the colour of your child's house team or a plain white t-shirt and Black trainers (no bright ones).

On the days that the children have PE they can come to school already their PE kit. It is essential that all items of clothing are clearly marked with your child's name, including coats and PE kit.



CommuniTea

Join us for a tea & coffee morning once a month right after drop-off. A chance to meet, chat and connect with other parents in our school community. If you can bring a mug that would be great!

We'd love to see you there!



There's something magical in the way that coffee can brighten our morning mood and give us the spark to seize the day

**KS1 Hall - Entrance next to Neptune class
Until 10am**

**Thursday 4th December
Thursday 8th January
Thursday 12th February
Thursday 5th March
Thursday 2nd April
Thursday 7th May
Thursday 11th June
Thursday 9th July**

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

facebook.com/friendsbarnsole
 friends@barnsole-maritime.org



FRIENDS OF BARNSOLE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2025-2026



SEPTEMBER

12/09 : Year R Welcome coffee morning
19/09 : Family Disco

OCTOBER

10/10 : AGM

NOVEMBER

Christmas Card Designs

DECEMBER

04/12 : CommuniTea
12/12 : Fair Donation non uniform day
17/12 : Christmas Fair

JANUARY

08/01 : CommuniTea
16/01 : Year 6 Disco
23/01 : Year 5 Disco
30/01 : Year 4 Disco

FEBRUARY

06/02 : Year 3 Disco
12/02 : CommuniTea
27/02 : Year 2 Disco

MARCH

05/03 : CommuniTea
06/03 : Year 1 Disco
11/03 & 12/03 : Mothers Day Event
27/03 : Family Bingo

APRIL

02/04 : CommuniTea
23/04 : Bake Sale

MAY

Class tea towel
07/05 : CommuniTea
15/05 : Inflatables afternoon

JUNE

11/06 : CommuniTea
18/06 : Fathers Day Event
19/06 : Fathers Day Event

JULY

09/07 : CommuniTea
10/07 : Donation tag day
15/07 : Summer Fair

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 friends@barnsole-maritime.org



FRIENDS OF BARNSOLE

School DISCO

FRIDAY 23RD JANUARY

4PM - 5PM YEAR 5

5.15PM - 6.15PM YEAR 6

FRIDAY 30TH JANUARY

4PM - 5PM YEAR 3

5.15PM - 6.15PM YEAR 4

FRIDAY 6TH FEBRUARY

4PM - 5PM YEAR 1

5.15- 6.15PM YEAR 2

TICKET £3 - WATER PROVIDED

**KS1 HALL - ENTRY NEXT TO NEPTUNE
CLASS**

NO PHONES ALLOWED



**PURCHASE TICKETS VIA
[PTA-EVENTS.CO.UK/FRIENDSOFBARNSOLE](https://pta-events.co.uk/friendsofbarnsole)**

DISCOVER 100's OF FREE ACTIVITIES DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS



READY WHEN YOU ARE!
GO.MEDWAY.GOV.UK



MedwayGo
FREE ACTIVITIES DURING
SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

**A BETTER
MEDWAY**
Easier ways to be healthy

Medway
Serving You

8:30AM - 4PM
8AM EARLY
DROP OFF
fees apply

BROMPTON ACADEMY

FEBRUARY 2026

MULTI-ACTIVITY AND SPORTS CAMP

DAYS	THEMES
MONDAY 16 TH	Bouncy Castle & Football Penalty Shootout Inflatable
TUESDAY 17 TH	Pancake Making Day
WEDNESDAY 18 TH	Winter Olympics – Kurling, Snowball, Dodgeball, Bobsleigh Push & Speed Skating & Snowball Fight
THURSDAY 19 TH	Laser Tag & New Gymnastic Spring Boards
FRIDAY 20 TH	Valentine's Arts & Crafts

**CONTACT
US!**

07378 951411 www.strivepeandsport.co.uk

 @strivepeandsport

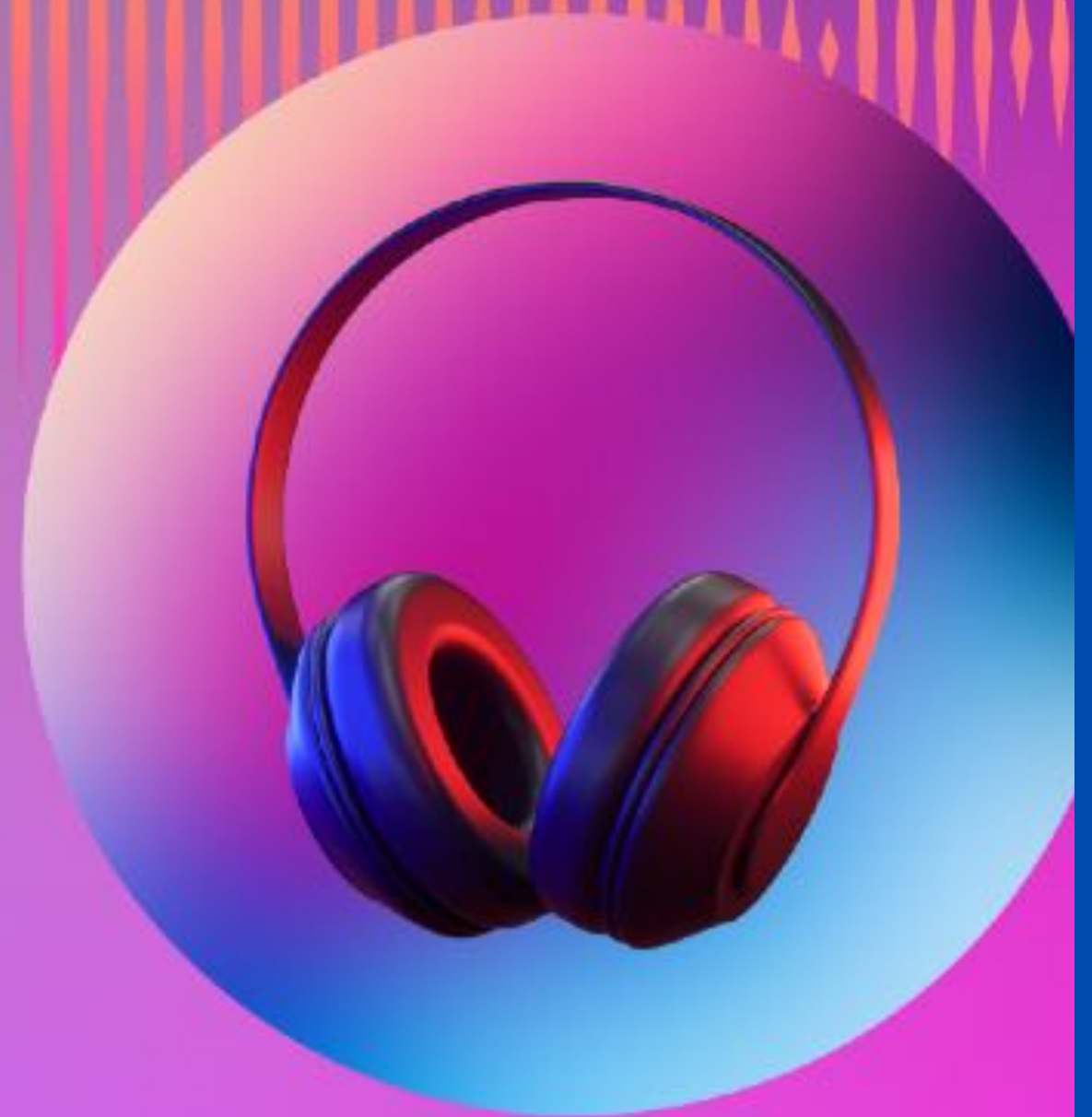
FREE

Online Music Technology Sessions

- Open to pupils in Year 5 - 13
- Tuesdays 5:30pm - 6:30pm
- Term time only

SIGN UP NOW

www.medwaymusicassociation.co.uk



TERM TIME ONLY

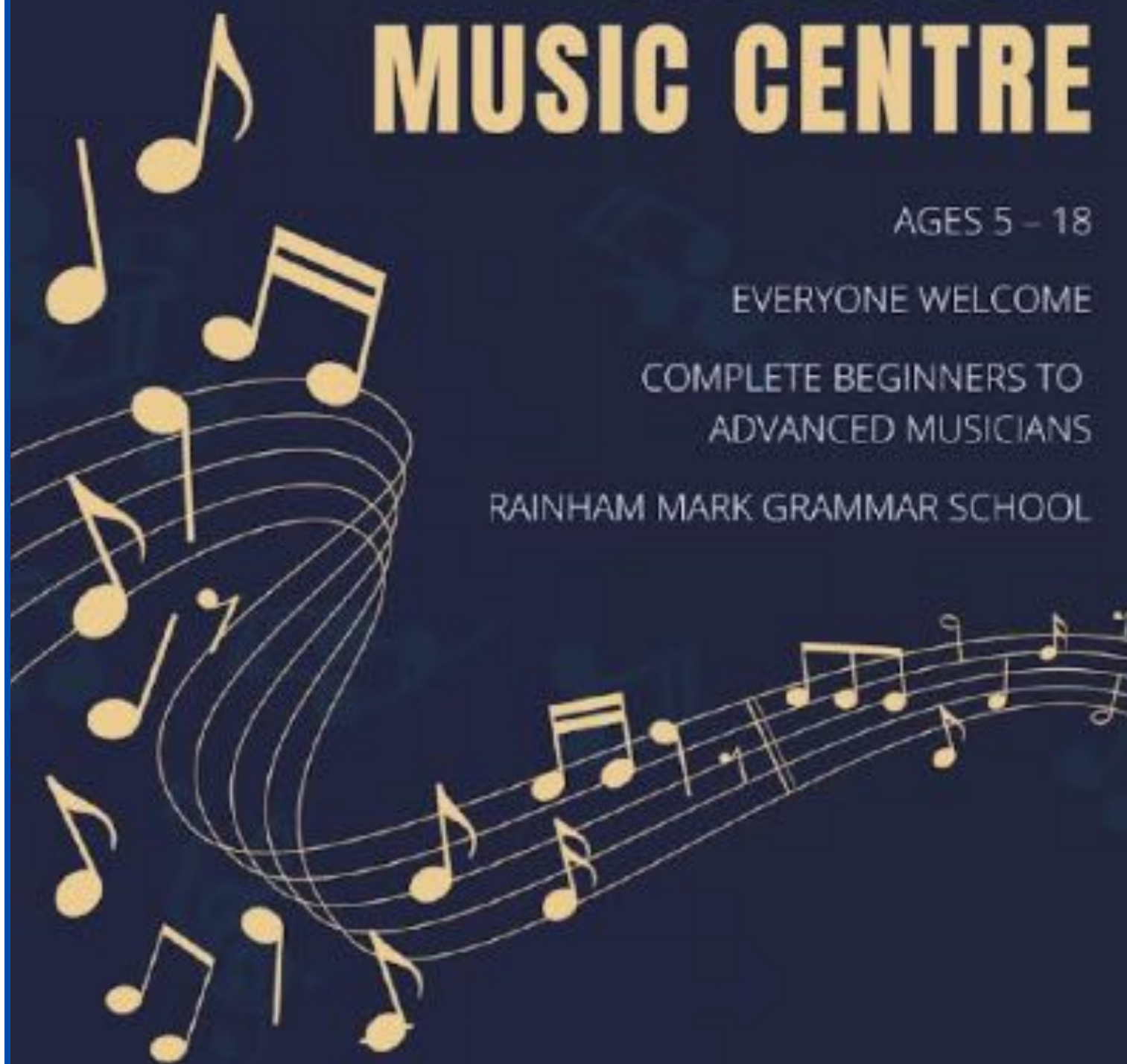
JOIN OUR SATURDAY MUSIC CENTRE

AGES 5 - 18

EVERYONE WELCOME

COMPLETE BEGINNERS TO
ADVANCED MUSICIANS

RAINHAM MARK GRAMMAR SCHOOL



DISCOVER MORE

www.medwaymusicassociation.co.uk

MEDWAY MUSIC ASSOCIATION'S

KS1 SATURDAY MUSIC GROUP



RAINHAM MARK GRAMMAR SCHOOL



09:15 - 10:00AM

For children in Year 1 and 2

Our KS1 group is designed to introduce children to music through some exciting and engaging musical activities.

SIGN UP NOW

[WWW.MEDWAYMUSICASSOCIATION.CO.UK /SATURDAY-MUSIC-CENTRE](http://WWW.MEDWAYMUSICASSOCIATION.CO.UK/SATURDAY-MUSIC-CENTRE)

ENQUIRIES
INFO@MEDWAYMUSICASSOCIATION.CO.UK





Class Attendance for the year so far ...

Infants

Saturn 95%
Neptune 95%
Mercury 93%
Comet 92%
Moonbeams 91%
Jupiter 90%
Venus 90%
Mars 89%



Juniors

Oberon 97%
Phoenix 96%
Titan 96%
Aquarius 96%
Apollo 95%
Icarus 95%
Juno 94%
Dragon 93%
Pegasus 92%
Capricorn 92%
Polaris 91%
Aquila 91%
Orion 89%

Dates for the Diary

Friday 23 rd January	Yr 5 Disco (4pm-5pm) Yr 6 Disco (5.15pm-6.15pm) <i>Further information to follow</i>
Friday 30 th January	Yr 3 Disco (4pm-5pm) Yr 4 Disco (5.15pm-6.15pm) <i>Further information to follow</i>
Friday 6 th February	Yr 1 Disco (4pm-5pm) Yr 2 Disclo (5.15pm-6.15pm) <i>Further information to follow</i>
Tuesday 10 th February	Yr R and Yr 6 Height, Weight and Measure
Thursday 12 th February	CommuniTea - Join us to meet, chat and connect with other parents in our school community (younger children welcome) (9am-10am) KS1 Hall
Friday 13th February	Spring Term 1 ends
HALF TERM	Monday 16th February-Friday 20th February
Monday 23rd February	SCHOOL RETURNS
Thursday 5 th March	CommuniTea - Join us to meet, chat and connect with other parents in our school community (younger children welcome) (9am-10am) KS1 Hall
Thursday 5 th March	World Book Day <i>Further information to follow</i>
Friday 6 th March	Yr 1 Disco <i>Further information to follow</i>
Wednesday 11 th & Thursday 12 th March	Mother Days Event <i>Further information to follow</i>
Thursday 11 th March-Wednesday 18 th March	Scholastic Book Fair <i>Further information to follow</i>
Friday 27 th March	Family Bing <i>Further information to follow</i>
Friday 13 th March	Red Nose Day <i>Further information to follow</i>
Friday 20th March	INSET DAY
Wednesday 25 th March	Parents Consultation Meetings 3.30pm-5.30pm <i>Further information to follow</i>
Wednesday 1 st April	Parents Consultation Meetings 3.30pm-5.30pm <i>Further information to follow</i>

Dates for the Diary

Thursday 2 nd April	CommuniTea - Join us to meet, chat and connect with other parents in our school community (younger children welcome) <i>(9am-10am) KS1 Hall</i>
Thursday 2nd April	Spring Term 2 ends
Friday 3rd April-Friday 17th April	Easter Holidays
Monday 20th April	SCHOOL RETURNS
Thursday 23 rd April	Bake Sale
Monday 4th 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) <i>(9am-10am) KS1 Hall</i>
Monday 11 th May-Thursday 14 th May	Yr 6 SATs Week
Friday 15 th May	Inflatables afternoon (3.30pm-5pm) <i>Further information to follow</i>
Monday 25th May-Friday 29th 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) <i>(9am-10am) KS1 Hall</i>
Thursday 18 th & Friday 19 th June	Fathers Day Event <i>Further information to follow</i>
Wednesday 8 th July	Summer Fayre
Thursday 9 th July	CommuniTea - Join us to meet, chat and connect with other parents in our school community (younger children welcome) <i>(9am-10am) KS1 Hall</i>
Friday 10 th July	Donation Tag day
Wednesday 15 th July	Summer Fair Infant Site
Tuesday 21st July	End of School Year

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI TOYS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

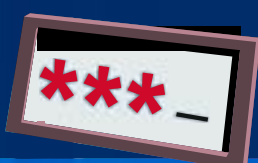
This festive season, the newest toys on the shelves do not just blink or make noise; they listen. Many now come with artificial intelligence (AI), allowing them to talk, learn, and even respond to a child's emotions. These toys can be educational and engaging, but they also collect, store, and process information. This guide explains what that means for families and why it matters.

TOYS THAT LISTEN AND LEARN



When a toy uses AI, it collects data such as voice recordings, interactions, and background sounds. This information is sent to remote servers, where it is analysed to improve responses. Your child's voice becomes training data, which may be stored indefinitely or shared with third parties.

WEAK SECURITY PROTECTIONS



Some AI toys have poor password protection or open network connections. Others may have microphones or cameras that stay on, even when the toy appears to be off. This can lead to recordings being made without your knowledge, including conversations unrelated to play.

ARTIFICIAL VOICES, REAL INFLUENCE



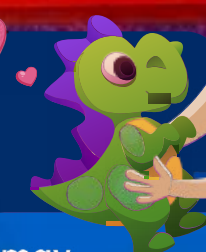
For very young children, an AI companion may become one of the first voices they interact with regularly. How that voice shows humour, empathy, or authority can shape how a child learns to communicate. If the model is artificial, then part of what is learned is artificial as well.

PRESSURE TO KEEP ENGAGING



Some toys reward repeated use or track engagement, encouraging children to interact more. When children compare how their toys perform, it creates pressure to play more often. This increases the amount of data collected and can make learning feel like competition.

MARKETING THROUGH PLAY



Toys that learn a child's preferences may feed that data into future advertising. A toy that knows a child's favourite colour or hobby could help a company design more targeted marketing to that child and their family.

PLAYTIME AS DATA TRAINING



The information collected from children helps train AI systems. Their voice, emotional responses, and behaviour shape how machines 'understand' people. Play becomes part of a much larger system that influences how future technologies behave.

Advice for Parents & Educators

START WITH A CONVERSATION



Talk to young people. Explain that some toys learn from what they say and do. Help them understand that even friendly technology should have boundaries, and to ask questions about it. Curiosity is healthy, blind trust is not.

SET LIMITS ON USE



Turn off Wi-Fi or Bluetooth when the toy is not in use. Check for updates regularly, as they can change privacy or safety settings. Treat connected toys like any smart device; they should be monitored, updated, and switched off when not in use.

MODEL DIGITAL AWARENESS



Children learn from adults. If they see you checking privacy settings, reading terms, and talking openly about online safety, they are more likely to do the same. Show them how to question technology in a healthy way.

RESEARCH BEFORE YOU BUY



Look for toys that work offline or store data locally. Check for a free or demo version so you can test how it behaves. Read privacy policies to understand what data is collected, where it goes, and whether it's shared with others.

REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS



Find out where the data is stored and who has access to it. Some companies sell or share data with advertisers. If the toy connects through an app, check what it requests access to and limit those permissions whenever possible.

BALANCE AI WITH REAL PLAY



AI toys can be fun and creative, but they are not a replacement for real human interaction. Encourage time away from technology with activities that foster emotional and social development. Use AI toys to support learning, not define it.

Meet Our Expert

Clara Hawking is Executive Director of Kompass Education. She advises governments, school trusts, and global organisations on AI governance and safeguarding, helping schools and families understand how technology shapes learning, wellbeing, and the digital future of children.



The National College

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about DIGITAL DEVICES & WELLBEING

Children aged 7 to 14 now spend roughly 3 to 5 hours a day on phones, tablets, consoles, and computers. That much screen time has parents and educators worried – not just about the hours logged, but about online safety and the knock-on effects on mental health. This guide brings together practical, expert-backed strategies so adults can nurture healthier digital habits and help young people thrive both on and offline.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SLEEP DISRUPTION

Excessive screen time, especially before bed, can interfere with melatonin production and delay sleep onset. Children may struggle to concentrate or regulate emotions due to poor sleep hygiene linked to late-night device use.

ONLINE PEER PRESSURE

Social media platforms expose children to unrealistic standards and peer validation loops. Likes, comments, and follower counts can influence self-worth and lead to anxiety or risky behaviour to gain approval.

CYBERBULLYING EXPOSURE

Children may encounter bullying through messaging apps, games, or social media. This can be persistent and anonymous, making it harder to detect. Victims often feel isolated and reluctant to report incidents.

REDUCED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Time spent on screens often replaces outdoor play and physical activity. This sedentary lifestyle can contribute to obesity, poor posture, and reduced cardiovascular health.

EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

Fast-paced digital content can overstimulate young brains. Children may become irritable, impatient, or struggle with boredom and emotional control when not engaged with screens.

PRIVACY AND SAFETY RISKS

Children may unknowingly share personal information or interact with strangers online. Without guidance, they may not understand the long-term consequences of digital footprints or unsafe online behaviour.

Advice for Parents & Educators

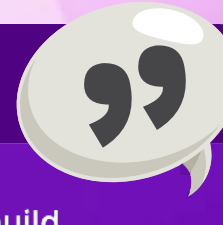
SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Establish screen-time limits and device-free zones, e.g. classrooms and dinner tables. Use parental controls and co-create a digital use agreement with children to encourage accountability. Trying a visual schedule or timer app can help children understand and stick to limits.



ENCOURAGE OPEN DIALOGUE

Create a safe space for children to talk about their online experiences. Ask open-ended questions like, "What did you enjoy online today?" to build trust and awareness. Try setting aside 10 minutes each day for a digital check-in where children can share what they've seen or done online.



MODEL HEALTHY HABITS

Children mirror adult behaviour. Demonstrate balanced device use, take regular screen breaks, and prioritise face-to-face interactions to reinforce positive behaviours. Making a habit of putting your phone away during meals and conversations can show that real-life interactions come first.



PROMOTE DIGITAL LITERACY

Teach children how to evaluate online content, recognise misinformation, and understand privacy settings. Empower them to think critically and act responsibly in digital spaces. You could use real-life examples from the news or social media to help children practise spotting fake information.



Meet Our Expert

Adam Gillett is Associate Vice Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School and works on secondment one day a week for Minds Ahead, which works with schools on improving their mental health provision.



The National College