Week 7 term 1, 16th October 2026



What a great Harvest week we've shared together! The **beautiful autumnal weather** has certainly helped set the scene, bringing crispy leaves underfoot and stunning morning sunrises remind us how lucky we are to have these beautiful seasons. I spoke to some families on the gate about how lovely is it that we get to stop and **see the world through our children's eyes**!

In the midst of our busy adult lives, it is such a gift to be reminded that the **turning leaves, a glistening, dew covered spider's web**, or the **joy of finding the "perfect" walking stick** are really **magical** small world moments and we agreed that the **children have shared the beauty of these simple things so eloquently** with us this week in their Harvest events.

From **brave first timers on stage** (who only joined us SEVEN weeks ago) to all those **remembered lines**, **shared poems**, and lets be honest, pretty **great singing**, *every* child was an **absolute star** this week.

Harvest is such a special milestone in the year, it's our first chance to pause and see how settled, confident, and fab our children are in their new classes. Think back to those summer nerves; they are are long gone now, and you should be so proud of your child (we are)!

nb - I will be **taking the harvest donations to the food banks on Thursday**, so for those who asked, yes, you have a little more time! (Thank you for your donations, see inside for a fab picture!)

We were very honoured to be **one of only 3 primary schools in the South West to be invited to the Regional School of the Year Awards for Modeshift**. We didn't win (a close second I am sure) but this shows how amazing LWG continues to be and thank you all for supporting!

Reminder = school is **closed to children next Monday, (19th Oct), for an INSET day**, as our team joins partner schools across South Gloucestershire for shared training.

If your children are feeling a bit tired as we head into this four day week, it's no wonder...

Think back just a few short weeks to hunting down uniform labels and back to school haircuts!

Since then, on top of settling into new classes and higher expectations, we've squeezed in: **'Meet the Teacher' sessions**, **EYFS coffee morning**, **Open Classrooms**, **photos**, and **World Mental Health Day**. But that's not all, there's been a **live Wizard of Oz performance**, **whole school Cricket coaching**, **Year 6 swimming**, **science assemblies**, a **disco**, **non-uniform days**, **WOW days**, and an amazing SEVEN **Harvest celebrations**!

Phew! Thank you for all your high fives and smiles at the gate and your kind feedback after Harvest and other events. As we say, school is made of the people in it, and your children, supported and prompted by you, all make Longwell Green the happy and exciting community it is. Have a restful long weekend, and we'll see you bright and early on Tuesday, 20th October!







Pictures, counting in EYFS, Y5 having a brain break on a WOW day, Y3 music, more EYFS maths, playtime fun, being pleased with work (more photos inside)

SAFEGUARDING REMINDER

Longwell Green

SHARING PHOTOGRAPHS & VIDEOS

1	**GENERAL RULE** Please only share images & videos of your **OWN CHILD** on social media.
2	**RESTRICTED INDIVIDUALS** We have children who, for safeguarding reasons, **CANNOT** have their images shared.

Thank you for helping us keep everyone safe.

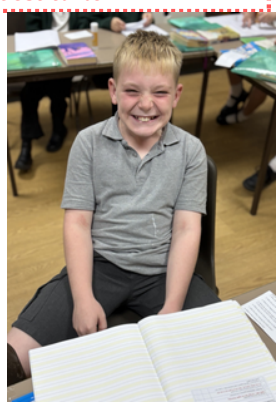
"I am sad that some families don't have dinners. Our harvest will help them." A Y2 child who really understood why we donate food for harvest time



Parents' guide to Sharing Pictures

A Parent's Guide to Sharing Pictures | Skips Safety Net (skipseducational.org)

Skips Safety Net's advice gives tips, and reminders re images online (with the focus on helping children know what to do). It gives excellent advice on image sharing that can be understood by children, it is hard hitting enough to make children think, without scaring them. Have a look, perhaps talk through the items there, especially if your child has a mobile phone or other device that can take images.



YEAR 6 SCIENCE WOW DAY!





Our Year 6 pupils enjoyedan exciting Science WowDay, packed full of fascinating discoveries andhands-on learning! We began the day by exploring human evolution, thinking about how humans have changed over time, before finding out more about the life and work of the famous scientist Charles Darwin and his groundbreaking theory of evolution.



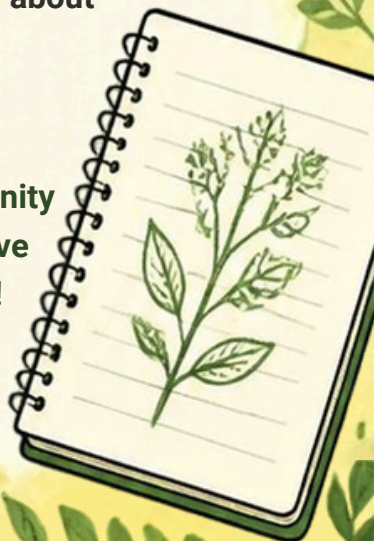
Next, the children became budding scientists and artists as they created detailed natural drawings in their logbooks, carefully observing and recording the world around them. We then investigated animal adaptations, discovering how different animals have developed special features to help them survive and thrive in their habitats.



In the afternoon, the excitement continued with a science experiment that encouraged the children to think scientifically, make predictions and record results. The class learned about Darwin's Finches from the Galapagos Islands. He discovered the finches on each island had a different beak depending on the available food on the island. The children investigated the effect of different beak types on the 'food' they were able to collect. To finish our action-packed day, the pupils got creative by making their own fossils, exploring how fossils form and what they can tell us about life on Earth millions of years ago.



It was wonderful to see the children so engaged, curious and enthusiastic throughout the day. They had a fantastic opportunity to bring their science learning to life, develop their investigative skills and discover just how amazing the natural world can be!






the ride need to go around so that all the
8,451 strawberries over a year.
d in boxes of 8
s can be made?
b)










finch
Galapagos
adapted
to the
big beak
beak
darwin






Darwin's Finch
Galapagos
Tortoise





Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

Items will go on sale from Monday 12th October for the final two weeks of this term, and then continuing into the first week back after half term (subject to stock, as our school Remembrance Event will take place on Friday 6th November).



No fixed price, but please talk to your child about giving a sensible donation. We've had some try buying multiple items with pennies, missing the point. Most give between 50p and £2. It's all voluntary, your support appreciated!



Price £1.50 each (slap bands)



Price £1 (pencil)



Price £2 (fabric bands)



Stickers - Price any donation



Price £1.50 each (reflective bag tag)

Please talk with your child about a sensible donation amount to support the charity. Thank you!



Y5s being happy, Y6 during World Mental Health Day. Y1s teamwork measuring in non-standard units, and Y2s doing DT / cooking









Longwell Green PE News

Boys Football vs St Anne's - Tuesday 12th October 2-1 victory!

Well done to our boys' footballers for a brilliant 2–1 win against a strong St Anne's side on Monday!

The boys battled hard up the slope in the first half, with Jonny putting us 1–0 ahead. Our defenders were immense in the second half, with Luke, Austin and Brandon in goal all making key contributions. Henry sealed the win with a fantastic long-range strike in the final five minutes!

Onto the next round! Well done to Brandon, Koby, Austin, Luke, Henry, Reggie, Jonny, Harrison, Jaxon and Jacob.



Girls' English School Football at Almondsbury – Tuesday 13th October

A huge well done to our girls' football team who represented the school in the Large Schools Cup at Almondsbury on Tuesday!

The girls played four group-stage matches, winning all four without conceding a single goal! An incredible achievement and a fantastic team effort.

They have now qualified for the next round, which takes place next term. Good luck, girls!

Well done to Ava, Megan, Ruby, Gracie, Gracie, Myah, Bella, Olivia and Olivia!



Longwell Green PE News

KS2 Netball @ Mangotsfield Wednesday 14th October

A huge congratulations to our KS2 netballers, who took part in the Large Schools Tournament at Mangotsfield on Wednesday!

We entered two teams, both of whom won every game until they faced each other in the final match. Fittingly, the tournament ended with a 2–2 draw between our two teams!

Well done to everyone involved – a fantastic achievement!



What a wonderful Harvest week we've shared together! As I said on the front, we have been blown away by the pride and maturity of *every single child*. Standing up in front of a full hall takes a bucketload of courage, perseverance, and determination (and many more of the values and skills we teach in school and you also teach at home)! Watching them beam with pride and show off their absolute best for you was deeply moving. You should be so proud of them, we certainly are!



A huge thank you for the astounding mountain of donations flooding into school this week! If you'd still like to contribute, there is still time: we'll be delivering everything to local foodbanks on Thursday next week, so non perishable items are very welcome until then.

This is such a great way for children to see that they can make a real difference in the world and learn the kindness of helping others. Thank you, parents and carers, for being such great role models!



★ FRIDAY 23RD OCTOBER ★

WHAT TO EXPECT

- ★ Dress-up day!
- ★ TTRS battles between classes
- ★ TTRS battles between teachers
- ★ **LIVEGrandFinalShowdownin the hall: Students vs Teachers**
- ★ Time in classes to rock out on TTRS
- ★ Certificates!

HOW CAN I PREPARE?

1 ROCK YOUR LOOK

Choose a whole rock-star outfit or add a few rock-star accessories.

2 GET PRACTISING

Get practising on TTRS ready to take on your friends and teachers!

DRESS UP • PRACTISE • ROCK OUT!

West of England MUSIC & ARTS



Strum and Play!

Ukulele Experience Morning at Little Stoke Music Centre

Come and learn the ukulele or improve your skills if you already play! Perfect for children age 6 - 11.

Saturday 17th October
Little Stoke Primary School BS34 6HY

Arrive at 9.20am for a 9.30am start. Short performance for parents 10.20am - 10.30am.

Ukuleles will be available to borrow if you don't have your own.

Scan to sign up

wema.org.uk/form/ukulele-experience-morning

Registered Charity Number 1204508

Supported using public funding by Department for Education | ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

MEMORIES
2,000 YEARS IN THE MAKING

THE ROMAN BATHS BATH



EEW! REVOLTING ROMAN REMEDIES
FREE TRAIL
16 Oct–1 Nov

October Half Term at The Roman Baths

- ***16 Oct-1 Nov:*** Follow our new *Eew! Revolting Roman Remedies* family trail.
- ***24 Oct-1 Nov:*** Meet a Roman doctor. Make your own Roman Remedy.
- ***31 Oct:*** Get crafty with our Halloween Scraptastic Event with Children's Scrapstore Bristol (£5)

Find out more
ROMANBATHS.CO.UK

Save up to 50% with a family ticket

Admission to The Roman Baths is free for Discovery Card holders*

*Valid with B&NES Residents' Discovery Card

Bath & North East Somerset Council
Improving People's Lives

VAG
Victoria Art Gallery



"These are the best art activities for kids in Bath!" - previous participant

Find out what's on

October Half Term at Victoria Art Gallery

- Visit the colourful Bath Society of Artists Annual Open Exhibition
- Find and draw flowers and make a bouquet from tissue paper at Mini Makers (£5)
- Have fun making your own unique flowers at Create and Colour (free)

Exhibition tickets free with Discovery Card*

victoriagal.org.uk

*Valid with B&NES Residents' Discovery Card

Bath & North East Somerset Council
Improving People's Lives

Creative calm

GO WITH THE FLOW YOGA

Adele Morris Art

Art & Yoga Holiday Club



Thursday 29th October

9:30-3pm

Saltford Hall

near Bath/Bristol



For ages 5-12

£38

To book go to...
www.gowiththeflowkids.co.uk

















I reduced them (Sent from the council) as the ideas are the key parts. See here for more information on them all www.southglos.gov.uk/costofliving

Also: Community Welcome Spaces offer a warm and friendly welcome and are free to use. Some offer hot drinks, activities and facilities plus information on local financial support and energy saving tips.

Find a welcome space here: www.southglos.gov.uk/community-welcome-spaces

EYFS PHONICS SAVE THE DATE

Save the date for our EYFS Phonics Evening. This evening will be adults only as we want to be able to give you the best opportunity at supporting your child with phonics at home.

03

NOVEMBER

4:30PM

Please use the microsoft form to sign up for your place!

https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/BSNDUyPBrY

Welcome to the

Longwell Green & Willsbridge Community Nature Reserve

Where local people celebrate and make space for nature wherever they can



Connecting with nature



Caring for our local creatures



Making space for wildlife

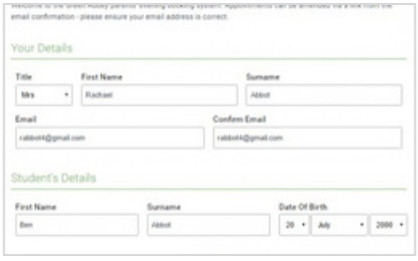
You are part of an area where streets and neighbours are coming together to make a 'Community Nature Reserve'. A Community Nature Reserve is made up of gardens, allotments, verges, window boxes, balconies and more! Whether planting for pollinators, building a hedgehog highway, or helping your neighbours to delight in the creatures we share our community with, there's lots different ways to get involved. Everyone is invited to take part, every small action makes a big difference!



Scan the QR code to join the Facebook Group

Parents' Guide for Booking Appointments

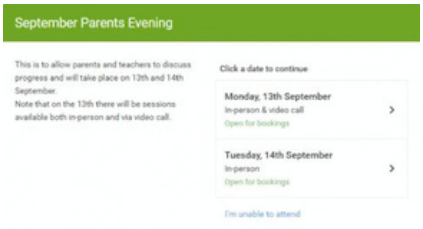
Browse to https://longwellgreen.schoolcloud.co.uk/



Step 1: Login

Fill out thedetails on the page then click the *Log In* button.

A confirmation of your appointments will be sent to the email address you provide.



Step 2: Select Parents' Evening

Clickon thedate you wish tobook.

Unable to make all of the dates listed? Click *I'm unable to attend*.



Step 3: Select Booking Mode

Choose *Automatic* if you'd like thesystem to suggest the shortest possible appointment schedule based on the times you're available to attend. To pick the times to book with each teacher, choose *Manual*. Then press *Next*.

We recommend choosing the automatic booking mode when browsing on a mobile device.



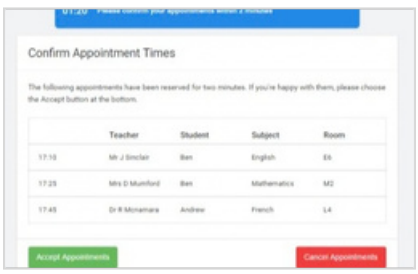
Step 4: Select Availability

Drag theslidersatthetopofthe screen to indicate the earliest and latest you can attend.



Step 5: Choose Teachers

Select theteachers you'dlike to book appointments with. A green tick indicates they're selected. To de-select, click on their name.



Step 6: Book Appointments (Automatic)

If you chosethe automatic booking mode, you'llsee provisional appointments which are held for 2 minutes. To keep them, choose Accept at the bottom left. If it wasn't possible to book every selected teacher during the times you are able to attend, you can either adjust the teachers you wish to meet with and try again, or switch to manual booking mode.

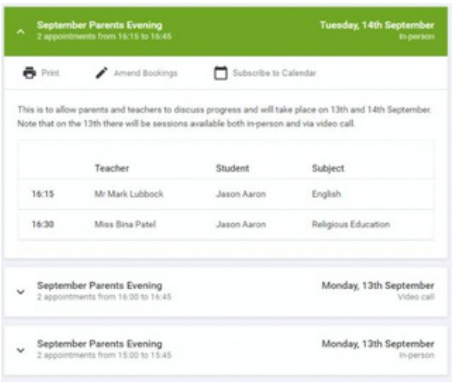


Step 7: Book Appointments

Click any of thegreen cells to make an appointment. Blue cells signify where you already have an appointment. Grey cells are unavailable.

To change an appointment, delete the original by hovering over the blue box and clicking *Delete*. Then choose an alternate time.

Once you're finished booking all appointments, at the top of the page in the alert box, press *click here* to finish the booking process.



Step 8: Finished

All yourbookings now appear on the My Bookings page. An email confirmation has been sent, and you can also print appointments by pressing *Print*. Click *Subscribe to Calendar* to add these and any future bookings to your calendar. To change your appointments, click on *Amend Bookings*.



GET READY FOR A FRIGHTFULLY FUN EVENING AT OUR ANNUAL CHILDREN'S HALLOWEEN PARTY - PACKED WITH GAMES, DANCING, AND SPOOKY SURPRISES!

FANCY DRESS IS OPTIONAL BUT ALWAYS WELCOME, SO FEEL FREE TO COME DRESSED TO IMPRESS - WHETHER THAT'S AS A GHOUL, GHOST, SUPERHERO, OR PUMPKIN! PARENTS AND CARERS CAN RELAX AND ENJOY THE EVENING TOO, WITH OUR BAR OPEN THROUGHOUT THE EVENT.

SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 4 - 11 YEARS OLD

A SAFE AND FUN WAY TO CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY

📍 WOLLENS SUITE, MEMORIAL STADIUM 🗓️ FRIDAY 30TH OCTOBER

🕐 7:00PM – 8:30PM

BOOK **HERE**



WREATH MAKING WORKSHOPS

Create your own beautiful Christmas wreath

FRIDAY 27TH NOVEMBER

Longwell Green Primary School

7:00pm – 9:00pm

£40 per person

Book online:

fleurtations-bristol.co.uk/wreath-making-workshop

Fleurtations

FLOWER STUDIO

October HOLIDAY CLUB

Fun Science

BOOK NOW!

27TH OCTOBER – BOO-OLOGY

28TH OCTOBER – CAULDRON CHEMISTRY

39TH OCTOBER – FRIGHTFUL PHYSICS



St Andrew's, Bristol & Southdown, Bath

10am - 3pm

Optional additional 'Stay n Play' hours, £3.50 per hour

EXPECT AN EXCITING VARIETY OF HALLOWEEN-THEMED SCIENCE ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIMENTS!

Head to fun-science.org.uk for more information

07708 214840

bath@fun-science.org.uk

fun-science.org.uk/science-holiday-clubs/





At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SHARING PHOTOS ONLINE

School is often a time chock-full of milestones for your child, and you may well be eager to share their accomplishments with the world. In today's digital age, sharing images of such precious moments on social media is commonplace, and – while that's a lovely thing to do – it *does* come with some risks attached. Our guide can help parents and carers to consider the potential dangers and make informed choices about safely sharing photos of their children online.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

INVASIONS OF PRIVACY

Even with the right settings in place, absolutely nothing online is 100% private. Anyone who can view your photos could take screenshots and potentially share them elsewhere. Privacy settings are still important, though, so it's always wise to ensure your social media accounts have them set up; just bear in mind that you can't *completely* control what happens to anything once it's gone online.

REVEALING PERSONAL DETAILS

Small details in photos can often reveal personal information. Backgrounds can give clues to where you live, for example, while school logos on uniforms, sports kits, or bags could help someone identify which school your child attends. With interactive maps and reverse image searches commonplace online, information like this could easily be misused by an individual with malicious intentions.

MISUSE OF IMAGES

Once something's been shared online, it's almost impossible to get it deleted. Photos can show up in search engine results and be downloaded, manipulated, and shared without consent. There's the potential for someone's images to be used for advertising purposes (which in many cases, isn't illegal) or even more inappropriate reasons, such as cyber-bullying or serious forms of exploitation.

ONLINE GROOMING

Pictures that convey details about your child's interests, activities, or daily routines could arm an online predator with the kind of information they can deploy to gain a child's trust. They might use this knowledge to pretend to be the same age as the child or to have a shared hobby. Essentially, the more a predator knows about a young person, the easier it is for them to invent some 'common ground'.

PRESSURE TO PLEASE

When their parents or carers share notable moments and accomplishments in a child's life on social media, some children may begin to feel an expectation to *always* meet certain standards, to achieve things, or to behave in ways that are "worth sharing". Knowing that other people (even friends and family) can see these posts on social media might also add to the pressure they're feeling internally.

IMPACT ON DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Every photo of a child posted online contributes to their digital footprint Young people's lives have never been so closely and publicly documented as they are now, and this permanent online presence could affect a child's future opportunities or the choices they make as they grow up – in addition to influencing how they see themselves and, consequently, their emotional wellbeing.



Advice for Parents & Carers

REVIEW SETTINGS REGULARLY

Make sure your social media's secure in terms of who can view your content or see your location (only family and trusted friends, for example). Privacy settings aren't totally foolproof, but they *do* make it tougher for strangers to access your pics. Reviewing your settings regularly is also a good starting point for conversations with your child about managing their own social accounts when they're older.

CHECK YOUR PHOTOS

Photos of your child shouldn't provide any clues to where they live or go to school: even a house number, street name, or car number plate could be a giveaway. Cover up or blur out school logos, too. If you *really* want to share a particular pic, you could post a watermarked or low-res version, which can help to discourage misuse as those images are less appealing to download or reproduce.

CONSIDER OTHER CHILDREN

When taking a group photo, make sure you get parents' or carers' permission to share it on social media. There may be an important safeguarding reason for them not wanting their child's photo posted publicly online, or it might simply not tally with their personal beliefs or cultural background. A quick conversation in advance, just to make sure, is usually hugely appreciated.

THINK AHEAD

Try to consider the longer-term implications of what you post. Would you be happy with that photo being online in 10 years' time? Would your child still be OK with the image when they're older? Once your child is mature enough, you could ask for their consent before posting: it respects their privacy, fosters trust and understanding, and helps them to start thinking about their own online life.

Meet Our Expert



Gabriella Russo is a safeguarding consultant with more than 30 years' experience working with children, families, and adults in education, local authority, and mental health settings, both in the UK and internationally. She has developed online safety training for local authorities and foster care agencies across Britain and is the online safety expert for FosterWiki.



National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

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Tips for Encouraging Open Discussions about DIGITAL LIVES

The online world is an entirely familiar and commonplace part of life for today's children and young people, far more so than for previous generations. There are many positives to children being able to access online materials, so it's important not to demonise the internet, games and apps, and limit the benefit of their positive aspects. At the same time, we *do* have a responsibility to educate children about the hazards they may encounter online (just as we would about real-world dangers) so it's essential that we don't shy away from talking to them about the complex – and often sensitive – subject of what they do and what they see when they're online.

Here are some suggestions for kicking off conversations with your child about their digital life ...

MAKE YOUR INTEREST CLEAR

Showing enthusiasm when you broach the subject signals to your child that you're keen to learn about the positives of their online world. Most children enjoy educating adults and will happily chat about what they use the internet for, or what games and apps they're into and how these work. Asking to see their favourite games and apps in action could help you spot any aspects that may need your attention – such as chat functions which might require a settings adjustment to limit contact with strangers. Keep listening even if your child pauses for a long time: they could be considering how to phrase something specific, or they may be gauging your reaction.

BE OPEN AND HONEST, APPROPRIATE TO THEIR AGE

At various stages, children and young people become curious about puberty and how their body changes; about relationships; about how babies are made; and about sexual health. If your child knows that they can discuss these sensitive subjects with you, they tend to be less likely to go looking online for answers – which can often provide them with misleading information and, in some cases, lead to them consuming harmful content. Don't worry if you don't immediately know the answers to their questions – just find out for yourself and go back to them once you have the facts.

REMIND YOUR CHILD THEY CAN ALWAYS TALK TO YOU

In my role I work with many children and young people who admit being reluctant to tell a trusted adult about harmful content they've viewed online, in case it leads to having their devices confiscated. Emphasise to your child that you're always there to listen and help; reassure them that if they *do* view harmful content, then they are not to blame – but talking about it openly will help. Children shouldn't be expected to be resilient against abuse or feel that it's their job to prevent it.

KEEP TALKING!

The most valuable advice we can give is to keep talking with your child about their digital lives. You could try using everyday situations to ask questions about their online experiences.

DISCUSS THAT NOT EVERYTHING WE SEE ONLINE IS REAL

Here, you could give examples from your own digital life of the online world versus reality – for example, those Instagram posts which show the perfect house: spotlessly clean, never messy and immaculately decorated. Explain to your child that there are many other aspects of the online world which are also deliberately presented in an unrealistic way for effect – such as someone's relationship, their body, having perfect skin and so on.

TRY TO REMAIN CALM

As much as possible, try to stay calm even if your child tells you about an online experience that makes you feel angry or fearful. Our immediate emotions frequently influence the way we talk, so it's possible that your initial reaction as a parent or carer could deter a child from speaking openly about what they've seen. Give yourself time to consider the right approach, and perhaps speak with other family members or school staff while you are considering your next steps.

CREATE A 'FAMILY AGREEMENT'

Involving your whole household in coming up with a family agreement about device use can be immensely beneficial. You could discuss when (and for how long) it's OK to use phones, tablets, consoles and so on at home; what parental controls are for and why they're important; and why it's good to talk to each other about things we've seen or experienced online (both good and bad). Explaining your reasoning will help children to understand that, as trusted adults, we want to make sure they are well informed and kept safe. Allowing children to have their say when coming up with your family agreement also makes them far more likely to stick to it in the long term.

Meet Our Expert



Rebecca Jennings of RAISE (Raising Awareness in Sex Education) has almost 20 years' experience delivering relationships and sex education and training to schools, colleges and other education providers. A published author on the subject, she also advises the Department of Education on the staff-training element of the RSHE curriculum.

National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

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Helping children and young people with MANAGING DEVICE STRESS AND ANXIETY

The internet and advances in the capability of digital devices have afforded us arguably the fastest period of technological and social evolution in living memory: creating opportunities for us to interact with people anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. It's also, however, blurred safety boundaries and added new stresses for young people, who are often less aware of the hidden hazards. With almost half of 10–15-year-olds experiencing bullying online and algorithms pushing content in front of our children every day, it's important to know how to address some of these challenges.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

LIVING ONLINE

The internet is awash with sophisticated algorithms that learn from our online behaviour and try to predict our wants and needs. That's very helpful in some respects, but it *can* make the online world difficult for children and young people to negotiate. Content can be brought to them at any time – it may not always be appropriate, and children may not have the ability or the support to deal with it.

PUSHY NOTIFICATIONS

Content is also directed at us through notifications from our apps: letting us know we have a new message or social post to read, for example. While that's useful in some circumstances, it conditions us to keep going back online (and is designed to do so) and can be a near-constant demand on your child's attention. As such alerts become more common, are we experiencing an 'attack of the pings'?

BLURRED BOUNDARIES

There are now so many ways we can communicate online in real time (like instant messaging apps) or with a delay (such as on social media) that it's possible to be constantly in conversation. Young people often prefer quickfire exchanges of text – but using fewer words can cause distressing miscommunications through the lack of non-verbal cues like facial expressions or tone of voice.



DIGITAL DEPENDENCY

As devices allow access to immediate external help in challenging situations, it's a concern that children may not be developing the inner confidence to work things out for themselves. Likewise, group membership is hugely important to young people – both in digital and 'real' life – and being excluded from online conversations can cause damaging feelings of loneliness and isolation.

DISGUISED DISTRESS

Children often haven't yet developed the emotional resources to deal with many of the setbacks of everyday life, so identifying when it's specifically something online that's worried them can be tricky. A certain level of stress is a normal response to a problem: it spurs us into action to keep ourselves safe. If the stress is excessive, though, it can feel overwhelming and potentially lead to anxiety or depression.

ANTI-SOCIAL SOCIALS

Social media can bring people together in hugely positive ways. Sadly, it does also have a darker side, including 'flame war' arguments which can escalate quickly and have hurtful consequences. With so many people looking on, 'group shaming' situations are also common – while there are continual opportunities for young people to compare themselves negatively with other social media users.

Advice for Parents & Carers

LEARN THE BASICS

It's impossible to keep up with *every* online change or *every* new app. The best option is to make yourself aware of the fundamentals of how the internet operates, so you can help your child to grasp how – and why – content reaches them. Devices and the digital world can be confusing, so learning to understand them better will give you the confidence to talk to your child about them.

PUSH DISTRACTIONS AWAY

Notifications to our phones and tablets can be helpful, but they sometimes make one wonder who's really in charge: the person or the device? Checking our phone as soon as it goes off is an easy habit to fall into – especially for young people. Try switching off non-essential alerts on your devices and encourage your child to do the same: you should both feel less triggered and more in control.

KEEP CHECKING IN

Healthy emotional regulation balances three systems: threat, drive and grounding. Down the various rabbit holes of the internet, however, that balance can easily slip away – so it's important to help your child manage their emotions when they're online. Check in with them regularly when they're on their device, and remember that 'distraction' and 'relaxation' aren't always the same thing.

TALK IT OUT

If a child mentions a comment that's been directed at them in a text chat or on social media, it may sound minor but can actually have a much bigger effect than we realise. In our evolved brains, any perceived threat can get internalised while our body reacts as if we were in physical danger – raising stress levels. It's always worth encouraging your child to get any concerns out in the open.

LOOK FOR THE SIGNS

This is tricky – and may depend on the child's age – but any sudden change in behaviour is worth looking out for. If your child seems to be checking their phone or tablet more, doesn't want to be parted from them, or appears unusually secretive, anxious or withdrawn, it could be a sign that something is amiss in relation to their device – and, possibly, that they're in need of extra support.

BE KIND: UNWIND

Be kind to yourselves as parents and carers. Remember that we're all in the same boat, trying to safely guide our children through this complex, fast-moving digital environment. Getting into the habit of having natural, relaxed conversations with your child about their online life (and yours) can level the playing field and make it far easier for them to open up to you about any concerns.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Carole Francis-Smith is an experienced counselling psychologist who specialises in promoting safe and ethical online communications. She consults with and offers bespoke training to businesses and organisations, supporting positive and effective online communications – often by considering some of the more hidden aspects of the various mediums.



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Source: https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/the-big-ask-big-answers/
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