

Parental Communication & Engagement



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Message from Headteacher

It's certainly been a busy and exciting week in school this week! On Monday we had 'Talking Heads' in school to deliver a production to Year 8 students around Mental Health and strategies to support well-being. Tuesday was our Christmas/Warm Jumper & Donation Day along with our Rewards Assemblies. It was great to celebrate so many special achievements right across the school. Throughout the week, we have also had our Movie Reward Treats taking place! On Wednesday morning it was another of our Tie Award Assemblies and it was fantastic to welcome so many parents/carers in to school for this very special event.

Thank you to everyone who took part in FoDC Christmas Shopping Voucher Raffle. Miss James, a Year 7 Parent/Carer won the raffle and selected a £100 Sainsbury's voucher.

As a result of all our staff and student donations we have been able to send out Christmas Food Hampers to some of our parents/carers as well as others in need in the local community. The generosity of students, staff and parents/carers has been wonderful this week. Students have donated tins and selection boxes that will be passed to the Good Shepherd and Birmingham Children's Hospital respectively. Over the last month staff have donated items that have meant that we have been able to support some of our most needy families



As you know, we break up today for the Christmas Holidays as school is closed tomorrow due to INSET. Thank you to all our parents/carers for your support over 2023. Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming our students back to school for the start of our Spring Term on Monday 8 January 2024. This will be a Week 2 Timetable.

Best wishes.

Merry Christmas

Mrs Sutton
Headteacher

Key Letters/Information Sent Out Recently

The vast majority of all letters are now emailed home and we use electronic reply slips as much as possible. The criterion for 'selected student only' opportunities are based on various factors depending on the trip and its focus. Unfortunately, we are unable to allow every student the opportunity to be involved with every activity which we understand sometimes causes disappointment. If you require more details about the selection process for any opportunity please contact the event organiser.

- Year 11 End of Term Letter - December 2023;
- Choir Symphony Hall Performance Opportunity Letter;
- Careers Newsletter December 2023/January 2024;
- Year 9 Severn Stars VS Manchester Thunder Netball Trip Letter **Selected students only.*

Events/Reminders

- Summer German Trip 2024 - 2nd Payment Due (£130) - Monday 8 January 2024;
- Year 9 Severn Stars VS Manchester Thunder Netball Trip Reply Deadline - Monday 8 January 2024;
- Year 10 & 11 Music Symphony Hall Trip - Thursday 11 January 2024.

Updates

Year 11 Consultation Evening - Thursday 25 January 2024 (Face2Face)

Just to give you the heads up that our Year 11 Consultation Evening will be taking place on Thursday 25 January 2024. This will be face to face although bookings will be made via our online booking system. A letter will be sent out in January 2024 with further details.

We Will Rock You

Our School Production of 'We Will Rock You' will take place from Wednesday 7 to Friday 9 February 2024 at 7.30pm. Tickets are on sale NOW! Apologies if they were unavailable when you last checked. They should now be showing up on [seaty.co.uk](https://www.seaty.co.uk). It's going to be amazing!!



5 Steps to Mental Wellbeing

Looking after our Mental Wellbeing is so important for us all. Please see below some very simple but effective ways which we can all help our own wellbeing.



Children's Flu Vaccinations 2024 Update

Please see below update from the NHS that we have been asked to share with you.

Vaccination UK **NHS England**

Protect your child this winter from **Influenza**

Children's Flu vaccination clinics 2024

Available to all children from Reception to Year 11

1 To consent your child for a FREE vaccine:

Its not too late for your child to receive the flu vaccine. We are holding clinics for school aged children at the following venues in January 2024.

These are **free walk in** flu clinics, where we are offering the nasal flu vaccine and the **gelatine-free** flu vaccine.

You can walk in and get the vaccine, or we can book you an appointment. Please contact our team via telephone on the numbers below.

2 Follow up clinic dates and times:

- DUDLEY:** Fens Pool Community Centre, 111 Tennyson, Pensnett, Brierley Hill, DY5 4HY
Call to book: 01384 431712
Saturday 20th Jan 9am - 13.30pm
- SANDWELL:** Wood Lane Community Centre, 157 Wood Lane, West Bromwich B70 9PT
Call to book: 0121 592 1110
Saturday 27th Jan 9am - 1.30pm
- WALSALL:** The South and Central Hub, Birchills Street WS2 8NF
Call to book: 01922 9020352
Saturday 27th Jan 9am - 1.30pm
- WOLVERHAMPTON:** Health Hub, Mander Centre, Wolverhampton WV1 3NH
Call to book: 01902 200077
Saturday 20th Jan 9am - 2.30pm

SAFE! For further information go to: www.schoolvaccination.uk

Top Tips for Setting up Parental Controls on New Devices

With lots of new devices given as presents over Christmas, please see below top tips for Parents/Carers for setting up new devices.

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. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit nationalonlinecollege.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

Top Tips for SETTING UP PARENTAL CONTROLS ON NEW DEVICES

In children's eagerness to start enjoying new digital gadgets immediately, it can be easy to overlook setting up the type of parental controls that can help to protect them online. If you don't sort those out from the very start, it can be an uphill battle – technologically and psychologically – to impose such controls later. Here's our rundown of what to look for when setting up the various internet-enabled devices that might be lurking under the tree at this time of year.



IPHONE

If your child's lucky enough to be getting their own iPhone, parental controls can help avoid issues like screen addiction and unsuitable content. Go into the settings and scroll down to 'Screen Time'. From here you can customise important settings including time limits on using the device, communication restrictions and content blockers. You can also lock your changes behind a passcode.

ANDROID

With Android devices, Google's Family Link app is your friend. You'll need a Google account – and a separate one for your child, which you should use when first setting up the device. Then, in Family Link on your own device, select 'Add Child' and enter their account details. This lets you specify limits on daily usage, restrict certain apps, block particular content and more.

PLAYSTATION

You can prep for a PlayStation before it's even unwrapped. At my.account.sony.com, create an account, then go to Account Management > Family Management > Add Family Member to set up your child's account, which you'll use to sign in on the console. You can restrict the age ratings of the games they can play and who they can talk to. On the PS3, you can make exceptions for any games you think are acceptable despite their high age rating.

IPAD

iPad parental controls are identical to those on iPhones. However, if you've got a shared family iPad and want to ensure your children aren't seeing anything age-inappropriate after you hand them the device, there's a feature called Guided Access (under Settings > Accessibility > Guided Access). With this switched on, young ones can only use the app that's currently open.

XBOX

The Xbox Family Settings app helps you manage which games your child can play (and when). You'll need to set up the console with your own account and then add a child profile. Make sure your account's password protected, so your child can't alter your choices later. You'll be walked through the functions at setup, but you can also reach them manually via Settings > Account > Family Settings.

NINTENDO SWITCH

Download the Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app on your phone, and you'll be shown how to link it to the console. Once that's done, you can limit how long your child can play each day, decide what age ratings are permitted and more. You'll also get weekly updates on how often they've used the device. These controls are accessible through the console itself, but the app is usually easier.

WINDOWS 11 PCS

On Windows 11, account management is key. Set up the device with your own account as the admin. Then go to Settings > Accounts > Family and Other Users and create your child's account (if you've already done this on a previous PC, just log in with those details). Microsoft Family Safety (either the app or the site) then lets you control screen time, what content children can view and more.

CHROMEBOOKS

Chromebooks' parental controls are managed via the Family Link app. Unlike an Android device, however, you need set up the Chromebook with your own account first, then add your child's. Go to Settings > People > Add Person and input your child's Google account details (or create a new account). Your child can then log in, and you can monitor what they're up to via Family Link.

MACS

Like iPhones, parental controls for Macs are managed via the Screen Time settings. Again, the crux here is to set yourself up as the administrator before adding any child accounts. In the settings, look for Users & Groups to create your child's account, then – while on their profile – use the screen time options to place any boundaries around apps, usage and who your child can communicate with (and vice versa).

SMART TVs

Smart TVs typically have their own individual parental controls. One of the most popular brands is Samsung – and on their TVs, you can control the content available to your child. In the settings menu, under 'Broadcasting', you can lock channels and restrict content by its age rating. Even this isn't foolproof, however: some apps (like YouTube) might still let children access unsuitable material.

Meet Our Expert

Benny Collins is a technology journalist and editor with more than 20 years' experience of working for titles such as the Sunday Times, Which?, PC Pro and Computeractive. He's appeared regularly as a tech pundit on television and radio, including on BBC Newsnight, Radio 4's Live and the ITV News at Ten. He has two children and writes regularly on the subject of internet safety.



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