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Dear Parents and Carers,

This term always seems to fly by and the final weeks were packed with festive fun! From nativities and carols in the community to our whole-school trip to the pantomime, Christmas lunches and class parties, the last fortnight truly captured the spirit of the festive season at Kingfisher - joyful, busy and full of fun.

It is hard to believe that just a year ago we welcomed Ofsted for our two-day inspection. Since then, we have continued to build on our success through constant review and improvement. We are delighted to share that last year's KS2 results have now been validated: in 2024, Kingfisher was the second highest achieving primary school in Somerset with 90% of pupils achieving the combined Reading, Writing and Maths measure (RWM). This year, we achieved 91% RWM combined, placing us third in Somerset and 28th across the entire South West region. **For the first time, Kingfisher has been listed in *The Times* Top 1000 Schools, ranked 672 out of 17,000 nationally.** These achievements reflect the dedication of our talented staff, the brilliance of our children and families, and the ongoing support of our Local Governing Body and PPAT. I could not be prouder.

Wishing all our families a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year. We cannot wait to see you again in January for what promises to be an exciting spring term. Please remember that the first day back for pupils will be **Tuesday, 6th January 2025.**

With festive greetings,



Mr Daniel Glentworth
Head teacher



Please remember to be careful and considerate when parking around the school; we want to keep our children and families safe. Please also be respectful of residents' drives and gardens. Thank you.

Safeguarding is everyone's business!

If you are concerned that a child may be at risk or that you are struggling to look after your own child, please phone Somerset Children's Social Care on **0300 123 2224**.

ChildLine
0800 1111




Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility

If you would like to speak to a social worker outside of office hours, please phone the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on **0300 123 23 27**.



Thank you... For your generous donations this term.

We have raised £145.50 for Children in Need.

You also donated to our Poppy Appeal by purchasing pin badges and wrist bands.

Thanks to your generosity we raised an incredible £234.46. As always your support is very much appreciated.



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

We are pleased with our attendance this academic year which is **97.2%** (the national average for this year up to December 8th was **95.1%**)

Thank you for supporting the school by sending your children into school.

Our winning class with the best attendance this term is:

Year 3 - Otter class with 98.2% - this is exceptional!

Please ensure you send your child to school so they arrive on time.

CLASS PAGES

Minnow Class

Minnow Class's first term at school has been a busy one. They have settled into the routine and structure of school life beautifully and you should all be very proud of how much they have achieved so far. We spent a lot of the first half term getting to know each other and the children enjoyed taking part in lots of 'all about me' activities including, painting self-portraits, sharing things about their families and learning how to write their name.



We then moved onto learning about Autumn and Harvest and enjoyed exploring through natural materials. We have been out on welly walks to look at the signs of the seasons changing and linking this back in with our different story focuses such as Stickman and The Leaf Thief. We also had a great time taking part in European Day of Languages where we learnt all about France and enjoyed trying some tasty French food. The children have also proven themselves to be amazing at their more formal learning and we have now completed the phase 2 stage of phonics and are moving into Phase 3. All the children seem to love reading and this is not only from school but also because of the support you offer them at home as well.

This second half term we started off by thinking all about the Understanding the World and Personal Social and Emotional Development parts of the curriculum. We had great fun learning all about Bonfire Night and making our breadstick sparklers. We explored Remembrance Day, what this means and why it is important.



We have also thought lots about friendship and being kind to our friends and what we can do to make sure we are being a good friend to others. Finally, these last couple of months Christmas preparation has been in full swing! The children have done amazingly at learning all their songs and lines for the Nativity as well as learning all about the meaning of Christmas and where the Nativity story comes from. Miss Jackson.



Dragonfly Class

I am so proud of all the children for completing their first term in Year 1! They have worked incredibly hard in English, focusing on neat handwriting and applying their phonics skills. The children produced wonderful pieces describing fireworks and writing excellent firework safety rules. We also learned about Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot.

More recently, the children have created fantastic stories about the Bear and the Hare. In Maths, they have continued to develop their understanding of addition and subtraction. We explored the days of the week and months of the year, which linked perfectly with our Science topic. This half term, we investigated the four seasons and observed changes as we moved from Autumn to Winter. The class loved presenting their own weather reports, making rain gauges, and designing colourful wind socks!



Across the wider curriculum, the children enjoyed programming Beebots in Computing and produced some amazing portraits in Art. In History, our topic was Toys, and we discovered how toys have changed over time. The children had great fun playing with toys and games from the Heritage Centre and they even brought in toys from the Victorian era. They dressed up as Victorian children, which was a real highlight! In Outdoor Learning, we studied leaves and how their colours change in Autumn. We also learned all about hedgehogs and created some beautiful pictures and sculptures.

We've had some fantastic visitors this term, including Gary and Kate from Carymoor, who taught us about recycling, and Martin from the Road Safety team. As Christmas approaches, we've been very creative, making tealight holders, Christingles, and decorating festive biscuits. The children made me so proud when they performed their Nativity play. Thank you for providing such wonderful costumes and supporting them with learning their lines. It has been a busy and exciting first term. I know moving from Reception to Year 1 is a big change, but the children have been absolute superstars. Thank you for your continued support. I hope you all enjoy a well-deserved break and have lots of festive fun together as a family. Merry Christmas! Mrs Kerrigan x



Mallard Class

What an incredibly busy and exciting term it has been in Mallard Class! The children have settled in beautifully and have worked exceptionally hard across all areas of learning.

In English, we have been writing for a range of different purposes, including creating amazing narratives, heartfelt letters, and informative texts. The creativity and effort the children have shown have been fantastic to see! In Maths, we have consolidated our understanding of place value, addition and subtraction, and explored multiplication and division strategies with growing confidence.



Our Computing lessons have been hands-on and fun! We explored programming using Bee-Bots and learned about photography using iPads—discussing what makes a good photo, choosing between landscape and portrait, and experimenting with editing techniques. In Science, we discovered all about animals and plants, their habitats, and why they are suited to these environments. History was equally exciting as we learned about the lives of Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale and how they transformed nursing for the better.

Beyond the classroom, the children enjoyed Careers Day, exploring a wide range of professions, and took part in a brilliant Carymoor workshop about the importance of recycling. We also had a wonderful trip to the pantomime to see *Beauty and the Beast*.

The Nativity was a real highlight of the term! The children sang beautifully, delivered their lines with confidence, and worked together as a fantastic team. It was a joy to watch and a testament to their hard work and enthusiasm. It has truly been an amazing term. The children have worked their socks off, and I can't wait to see what they achieve next!



Enjoy a well-deserved rest, and I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year! Miss Jones.

Otter Class

What a fantastic term it has been in Otter Class! The children have settled beautifully into life at Kingfisher, showing maturity, enthusiasm, and a real thirst for learning. From the very first week, they impressed us with their focus, teamwork, and determination. Each child has grown academically and personally, and it's been a joy to watch them flourish. They continue to uphold our motto of "being the best they can be"—making themselves and the staff proud every day.



In Science, the children explored friction through a hands-on investigation, testing how different materials affected a toy car's movement down a ramp. Predictions were made, ramps adjusted, and results discussed—ending with a fun challenge using sticky tape to see how high the ramp could go! Careers Day was another highlight. We welcomed inspiring visitors who shared their jobs and journeys. The children listened intently, asked great questions, and left motivated to think about their future.

In Art, Otter Class studied Georgia O'Keeffe and created stunning clay leaf bowls inspired by autumn colours. Their creativity and confidence shone through in every piece. Languages Day saw the children immerse themselves in German culture, geography, and food. Singing German songs brought plenty of laughter, and they ended the day sharing learning—and gingerbread—with Year 6. In Computing, they built on their algorithm knowledge using Scratch 3, creating interactive instruments and colourful geometric art. Their creativity and resilience in debugging were impressive. Design Technology was equally exciting as they designed and built catapults using natural materials, testing and refining their structures outdoors. Dot Day and Poetry Day provided brilliant opportunities for self-expression. Inspired by *The Dot*, they created digital art reflecting individuality. For Poetry Day, they wrote heartfelt poems about friendship, linking to PSHE work on kindness and online safety. Using AI to generate and perform poems sparked fantastic conversations about creativity and technology. We are so proud of everything the children have achieved this term. Their positivity, curiosity, and kindness shine through in all they do. Well done Otters, you've made this term exceptional! Have great Christmas!
Mr Green



Hedgehog Class



What an incredible term it has been in Year 4! We have been busy, creative and full of curiosity as we explored so many exciting topics across the curriculum. In Art and Design, we have had our hands full (and sometimes covered in clay!) creating wonderful pieces inspired by Nick Park's clay cartoons, beautiful Diwali lamps, detailed mini beasts, and dramatic volcano models. We've also experimented with charcoal in the style of L. S. Lowry and finished the term by designing Christmas cards with moving parts – full of festive flair!

In Geography, we've been discovering the power of our planet, learning all about volcanoes, mountains, and earthquakes and how tectonic plates shape the world we live in. Over in History, we stepped back in time to the Tudor era, exploring how the Tudors have influenced our lives today.

Our English lessons have taken us on incredible journeys through stories such as *A Store Full of Magical Things*, *The Iron Giant*, and *The Proudest Blue*, as well as many more. The children have shown fantastic imagination and a growing confidence in their reading and writing skills. In Maths, we are flying with our times tables progress – well done to everyone for their continued effort and determination!

We've also loved taking part in extra-curricular and careers days, meeting visitors, and exploring the world beyond the classroom. It really has been a busy and brilliant term! We are so proud of everything the children have achieved in Hedgehogs so far and the enthusiasm they bring each day. Have a wonderful Christmas break and a well-deserved rest – we can't wait to see what exciting learning the Spring Term will bring! Miss K



Swan Class

Swan Class has worked exceptionally hard this term, showing impressive determination and enthusiasm across all areas of the curriculum. In Maths, the children continued to develop their understanding of place value and fractions. They explored statistics by creating line graphs and interpreting information from a range of tables and charts. Towards the end of the term, they tackled the more complex skill of adding and subtracting fractions with different denominators, as well as converting improper fractions to mixed number fractions. Their perseverance and determination were evident as they mastered these challenging concepts.



In English, the class engaged with a variety of writing genres, including narratives, setting and character descriptions, letters, diary entries, and information texts. Highlights included writing a witness statement and a newspaper report inspired by the book theft in *Paddington 2*, as well as composing brilliant persuasive speeches that contributed to a stunning writing Shrek-themed display. A particular triumph came when every member of the class was named a winner in a highly competitive Young Writers Poetry Competition.

In Science, the children enjoyed hands-on experiments and research activities that deepened their understanding of the properties and changes of materials. This was enhanced by visitors from STEM who put this learning into action. Later in the term, they learned about reproduction in animals and plants, exploring the fascinating life cycles of living things.

In Geography, the focus was on rivers, with pupils studying their human and physical features in depth. In History, they explored the Victorian era and the impact of the Industrial Revolution, creating timelines of significant events, examining the impact of the Industrial Revolution, and analysing historical sources linked to Victorian workhouses. The children created marvellous two-page spreads to answer their enquiry question, "How did the Industrial Revolution change people's lives in Victorian Britain?"



In Art, the children explored collage and sketching, drawing inspiration from artists Robert Longo and Hollie Chastain. They experimented with techniques such as charcoal sketching and creating vibrant collaged artwork. In Design and Technology, they demonstrated imagination and skill by designing miniature playgrounds and crafting festive yarn Christmas ornaments. The children also thoroughly enjoyed taking part in house tournaments during PE and participating in whole-school enrichment days and weeks such as Careers Day, Black History Week, Languages Day, and World Mental Health Day. Alongside this, children have received wonderful visits from The High Sheriff of Somerset, Bishop Michael from Bath and Wells Diocese and many more. Year 5 staff would like to wish everyone a joyful Christmas break and wonderful start to the New Year.

Mrs Musgrave

Owl Class

As we wrap up another busy and exciting term, we're thrilled to share the fantastic learning and achievements of our Year 6 Owls. The children have truly soared in their knowledge and skills, tackling each topic with enthusiasm and resilience. Here are some of the key highlights from this term:



This term, we explored the moving and thought-provoking novel *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness. The children dived into character analysis, wrote poignant diary entries, and used powerful vocabulary to craft their own reflective pieces. They also mastered using punctuation such as colons, ellipses, and dialogue to bring their writing to life. During Maths sessions, our focus has been on fractions, decimals, and percentages, as well as deepening problem-solving skills. Owl Class tackled multi-step challenges with determination, and it's been wonderful to see their growing confidence in reasoning and justifying their answers.

In Science, we investigated light and how it travels. The children conducted experiments to explore reflection and refraction and learned about the human eye and how it processes light into images, supported by a fascinating visit from Robert Frith Opticians. We journeyed back to Ancient Greece this term, exploring its rich culture, mythology, and enduring influence on modern society. From learning about the birth of democracy to examining the achievements of Greek philosophers, Owl Class was captivated by the stories and legacy of this remarkable civilisation. In Geography, our focus was on the beautiful country of France. The children explored French landmarks, learned about its regions and rivers, and compared life in rural and urban areas. This linked beautifully to our French learning about how to discuss Paris in France.

This term, we also focused on building relationships and understanding British Values through celebrating differences. Owl Class participated in discussions about democracy, respect, and inclusion, and reflected on how we can celebrate diversity within our community. In Art and Design, the children explored the works of Vincent van Gogh and designed their own *Starry Night* interpretations inspired by his style. They also developed collaging techniques in the style of Eileen Agar and experimented with tessellation to create repeated patterns.

This term was enriched with exciting themed days and workshops:

- **Mental Health Day:** Through mindfulness activities and open discussions, we focused on the importance of mental well-being and strategies to stay positive.
- **Careers Morning:** The children explored a wide range of professions—from accounting and software engineering to the RAF, RNLI, SASP, and BAE Systems—and were inspired by guest speakers who shared their career journeys.
- **Remembrance Poetry with Sheila Hopkins:** We were incredibly fortunate to participate in a session with Sheila Hopkins, a local poet, who shared her passion for poetry writing and supported the children in creating their own poems inspired by remembrance.

As always, PE lessons have been a highlight for many, with a focus on teamwork through invasion games like netball and football. In addition, we discussed the importance of staying active and making healthy choices for both our physical and mental well-being. As we move into the next term, Owl Class will continue preparing for their SATs with tailored support and exciting opportunities for learning. Thank you for your continued support at home.



Wishing you all a restful and joyful break. Mrs Farnell

Remembrance

Remembrance is always an important occasion at Kingfisher, and this year was no exception. With many of our families connected to the armed forces, we take time to reflect on the sacrifices made by those who serve. Our whole-school assembly included moving readings and poems, including *In Flanders Fields*, performed beautifully by the children. Pupils who are part of Scouts or Brownies proudly wore their uniforms after attending parades over the weekend. Together, we raised an incredible **£234.46** for the Poppy Appeal. Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped us honour this special day.



Children in Need

£215.50 was raised by our school community for BBC Children in Need this year. Kingfisher was awash with Pudsey Bears as we raised awareness of the excellent charity work that is done by CiN.



Footballing Success

Pupils from across KS2 have participated in various footballing competitions at Bucklers' Mead Academy over the second Autumn term. Our teams have competed brilliantly against other schools, show excellent attitudes and ability. We were over-joyed when our B-Team were the Europa League Champions at the ESFA tournament. Kingfisher played 5 fixtures, were unbeaten – winning two and drawing three games. A superb team effort from all involved.



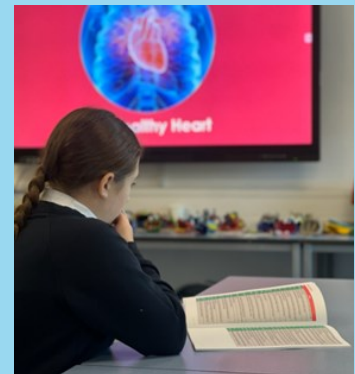
AIM High Maths Day – Stretch and Challenge

Selected Year 5 and Year 6 pupils enjoyed an exciting AIM High Maths Day at Thornford Primary School. The event focused on stretching and challenging our most able mathematicians, encouraging them to think deeply and creatively. Through a range of problem-solving and reasoning activities, pupils strengthened their mathematical skills while collaborating with peers from other schools. Their enthusiasm, teamwork, and determination were outstanding, and we are incredibly proud of their achievements!



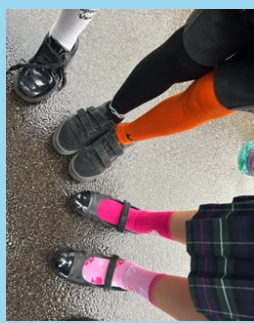
Brilliant Club – Aspiring to Further Education

This term, selected Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have begun an exciting journey with The Brilliant Club, a programme designed to raise aspirations and give pupils a taste of university-style learning. Guided by their PhD tutor, a heart specialist, they have been exploring the fascinating world of the human heart, building knowledge and research skills ahead of writing their own assessment pieces. The experience will culminate in a graduation ceremony at a local university in the spring term, celebrating their hard work and achievements. We are incredibly proud of their commitment and enthusiasm for learning at this advanced level.



Anti-Bullying Week – Personal Development

In November, Kingfisher marked Anti-Bullying Week 2025 with a focus on kindness and respect. Children and staff joined in by wearing odd socks, celebrating our similarities and differences in a fun and meaningful way. In class, pupils explored what kindness looks like and learned what to do if they are worried about bullying. We even ran a family competition to see who could wear odd socks in the most unusual place! Thank you to everyone who took part and helped make this an important and memorable week.



Family Learning

This autumn marked the exciting launch of our Family Learning Programme, led by our dedicated teachers and support staff. We have been thrilled by the fantastic response from our families, with excellent attendance at every session. Our Nursery kicked things off with a focus on the importance of messy play. Children and family members enjoyed a wide range of engaging activities; there was plenty of laughter (and lots of shaving foam!) as everyone got stuck in. Thank you to all the families who joined us and made these sessions such a success.



All year groups offered family learning sessions. Reception – Building Foundations Through Play and Reading; Year 1 – Phonics: Unlocking the Code to Reading; Year 2 – Developing Reading Comprehension; Year 3 – Formal Methods in Maths; Year 4 – Mastering Times Tables; Year 5 – Reading Comprehension in KS2 & Year 6 – Online Safety.



Planting for the Future – Eco-Council in action

Our Eco Council, supported by Mrs Farnell, teamed up with Countrywide Grounds Maintenance (our grounds contractor) for a special planting project. Together, they planted a large number of daffodil bulbs around the school grounds. If all goes to plan, we'll be greeted by a bright yellow "KF" blooming in the spring; a cheerful and eco-friendly display for everyone to enjoy.



Road Safety Workshops

Pupils across all year groups took part in Road Safety Workshops delivered by Somerset Highways. These interactive sessions taught practical strategies for staying safe as pedestrians, cyclists, and passengers, with age-appropriate guidance to help children make safe choices on the roads.



Carymoor Workshops – Science and Personal Development

Pupils in Y1, 2, 4 and 5 took part in workshops led by Carymoor Environmental Trust, focusing on sustainability, recycling and biodiversity. Activities included exploring composting, understanding the impact of waste on wildlife, and practical ways to reduce landfill. These hands-on sessions linked closely to our science and geography curriculum and encouraged pupils to think critically about environmental responsibility.



High Sheriff of Somerset Visit

We were honoured to welcome the High Sheriff of Somerset for a whole-school assembly, followed by talks with Year 5 and Year 6. The sessions focused on the role and responsibilities of the High Sheriff and the importance of civic duty. Pupils engaged brilliantly, asking thoughtful questions and demonstrating a strong understanding of community values.



Inter-Faith Day 2025

As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering respect and understanding of different beliefs, we celebrated Inter-Faith Day. Pupils explored a range of world religions through interactive online workshops, discussions and creative activities. The day encouraged curiosity, dialogue, and appreciation of diversity, helping children to develop cultural awareness and values of tolerance and inclusion; all key aspects of our PSHE and SMSC provision.



A visit from Bishop Michael

We were delighted to welcome Bishop Michael from Bath & Wells during his visit to Yeovil to record his Christmas message. He asked if he could visit Kingfisher and Year 5 had the privilege of meeting him. The children asked thoughtful and insightful questions about Christmas, his role as Bishop, and what he enjoys and finds challenging in his work. Their curiosity and respect were exceptional and Bishop Michael commented on how impressed he was with their engagement.



Christmas at Kingfisher

As is tradition, the last week of November saw the school transformed as Christmas decorations were put up with great enthusiasm. Our military family children, along with some special helpers, decorated the Christmas tree, creating a wonderful sense of belonging and joy. Christmas songs played on the radio and the school was filled with smiles and festive spirit. What a fantastic way to start the Christmas season at Kingfisher!



Carols in the Market Square – Music enrichment

For the first time, our choir performed carols in the Market Square, creating a memorable music enrichment experience and strengthening links with the local community. The event showcased pupils' confidence and musical talent in a public setting. We are grateful to Rev. Sarah for her support in organising the event and to staff who accompanied and prepared the children so well.



Christmas lunch

As is tradition, the whole school had their Christmas lunch on Wednesday 17th December. Children and staff thoroughly enjoyed themselves and our excellent catering staff made up of Charleen, Julie and Liza did an excellent job of providing a delicious lunch to over 250 staff and children.



Nativities – RE Enrichment & Performance

This term, pupils in Little Kingfishers, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 delighted us with their incredible nativity performances during the penultimate and final weeks of term. These special events were a true celebration of the Christmas story and an opportunity for our youngest learners to shine.

It was wonderful to welcome such large and supportive audiences, with parents, grandparents and family members filling the hall and creating a warm, festive atmosphere. The children's confidence, narration, acting and singing were exceptional and their joy was clear for all to see.

A huge thank you goes to our teaching and support staff, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure every detail was perfect; from costumes and props to rehearsals and stage direction. Their dedication helped make these performances memorable for everyone involved.

These nativities are a cherished tradition at Kingfisher, and this year's shows were a fantastic reminder of the power of community and celebration. Well done to all our pupils - you were amazing!



Christingle with Rev Sarah – RE Enrichment

In the final week of term, we were delighted to welcome Rev Sarah to Kingfisher for a very special day of learning and reflection. She spent the morning leading workshops with every class, explaining the meaning and symbolism of Christingle. Each child had the opportunity to make their own Christingle using an orange, a candle, cocktail sticks, sweets and raisins, while learning about what each element represents. The day concluded with a whole-school assembly where pupils revisited their learning and joined together in singing by candlelight.



Whole school trip to the Panto

Another Christmas tradition is the whole school visit to the Theatre in Yeovil to watch their annual pantomime. All pupils had the opportunity to enjoy a live performance as part of our on-going commitment to music and the arts. This year, we attended Westlands Entertainment Centre where the children thoroughly enjoyed Beauty and the Beast. Our brilliantly supportive PTA paid for every child's ticket again this year which meant there was no charge for any families.



Some photos from the Autumn term...



After School Enrichment Clubs - Spring term 2026

A reminder that you will be notified during the first week back after Christmas if your child has been successful in gaining a place at their chosen club.

All clubs will then start week commencing Monday 12th January and will run up to and including Friday 27th March 2026.



PTA Our PTA committee are already planning lots of exciting events for next year but they are desperate for more volunteers - please help if you can. Please keep an eye on their Facebook page and the PTA section of the school website for details of these events and when their next meeting is.

And finally...

It has been a real joy to see our newest members of the Kingfisher community settle into school life so quickly. Reception children have already formed new friendships and shown great enthusiasm for learning. They've made a brilliant start to their school journey and we're incredibly proud of the confidence, curiosity and kindness they bring to each day.



Please remember that you must use ParentPay to book the following:

- School lunches
- Breakfast Club
- After School Childcare



Diary Dates

Friday 19th December

- Last day of term

Monday 22nd December - Friday 2nd January

- **Christmas Holidays**

Monday 22nd December

- **Deadline for booking school lunches, Breakfast & After - School Club**

Monday 5th January

- **INSET DAY - School closed to pupils for staff training**

Tuesday 6th January

- First day of term

Wednesday 7th January

- Year 4 Swimming starts 6 weeks

Thursday 9th January

- **Rock up & Read 2.45pm**

Monday 12th January

- After School Enrichment Clubs start this week

Thursday 15th & Friday 16th January

- Life Education Workshops

Monday 16th February - Friday 20th February

- **Half Term**

Monday 23rd February

- First day back to school



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year ...

From all the staff here at Kingfisher Primary School and Little Kingfishers' Day Nursery, we would like to wish our families and wider school community a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SETTING UP NEW DEVICES FOR CHILDREN

At Christmas, millions of lucky children will be excitedly ripping the wrapping off new phones, tablets, computers or consoles. However, in the rush to let young ones enjoy their shiny gadgets, many parents neglect to set these devices up safely – increasing the chances of children going online and stumbling across adult content, making expensive downloads or installing unsuitable apps. A little time configuring the device properly can save a lot of anguish later. Here are our top tips to ensure that a dream gift on Christmas morning doesn't turn into a nightmare by New Year.

PASSCODES FOR IPHONE/IPAD

If your child's getting their own iPhone or iPad, you can set parental controls that make it difficult for them to access inappropriate content or download expensive apps. Once the device is set up, go to the Settings app and tap Screen Time, then select Use Screen Time Passcode and enter a passcode. Keep it to yourself so your child can't switch the protection off.

SCREEN TIME SETTINGS ON IPHONE/IPAD

Once you've set a Screen Time Passcode, you can adjust various safety settings. You could, for example, only allow communication with people from the Contacts app, place restrictions on App Store purchases and apply age limits to movies, music and web content. There are many more protective options available within the Screen Time settings section.

FAMILY LINK FOR ANDROID

Parents can manage Android phones and tablets, as well as Google Chromebooks, through Google's Family Link app. This gives your child some independence (and their own Google account) but lets parents monitor which apps are being used, set limits on content and ensure that parental permission is required to install apps. Look for Family Link in the Google Play Store.

ADD A CHILD TO FAMILY LINK

The easiest way to add a child's device to Family Link is to set it up with its own Google account. It's a good idea to create this before they use their new phone, tablet or Chromebook. Once they're logged in, open the Family Link app on your phone, press '+' in the top right and add a new family member using their Google account details. Then follow the on-screen instructions.

FAMILY SHARING ON A MAC

Families using a Mac get similar screen time options to iPhone and iPad users. Again, if you're setting up a Mac for a child, make yourself the main admin and add them as a user. This is handled through Apple's Family Sharing service, which not only allows you to put controls on child accounts but share apps and other purchases with them too. Search 'family sharing' at <https://support.apple.com>.

PLAYSTATION PARENTAL CONTROLS

With parental controls for the PS5, you'll need a PlayStation Network account (as the 'family manager') and the child will need their own account, which they should sign in with on the console. This all needs to be set up in advance, so you might want to do it before the big day. Go to PlayStation.com and search 'family account' for instructions.

DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR CHILD

If you're planning to implement any kind of restriction or protection settings on your child's new device, we'd recommend having a discussion with your young one first about what these controls do, and what they are for. If you try to impose parental controls surreptitiously or with no advance warning, don't be surprised if your child tries to find a way around them.

SET AN ADMIN ON PCS

On Windows PCs and laptops, it's important not to let your child share a general user account or be the main admin on the device. If you're booting up a new family PC or a child's own device, set it up using your own account details and you'll become the admin by default. Then set up children with their own separate account: Settings > Accounts > Family & Other Users > Add Other User.

SET WINDOWS LIMITS

Once your child's account has been created, a parent admin can go back into the Family & Other Users menu and apply limits to it. These include restricting screen time, the type of games and apps that can be installed, web filters and more. Microsoft also includes reporting tools which, for example, can email you with a weekly summary of your child's activity on the device.

TREAT AN XBOX LIKE A PC

The same control settings you use for a PC can be used to apply parental controls on an Xbox. Again, once your child is signed into the Xbox with their own account, you can then monitor and regulate their activity from a PC or web browser. Microsoft's dashboard allows you to manage voice communication through the console: so you can limit who can contact your child, for example.

INSTALL XBOX FAMILY SETTINGS

If you don't have a PC, but your child does have an Xbox, it might be easier to use the Xbox Family Settings app for iPhone or Android. Here, you can restrict console screen time (particularly handy if the console is in a bedroom), restrict communication and monitor the types of game being played. There's also a feature where you can allocate spending money for games or in-game purchases.

STAY VIGILANT

It's important to remember that none of these methods is 100% foolproof. Nobody will ever invent flawless filters or parental controls – not least because what's unacceptable to some parents is perfectly acceptable to others. So although devices' parental controls will help to keep your child safe online, they work best side by side with good old-fashioned parental vigilance.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, *Which?*, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on *Newsnight*, *Radio 5 Live* and *ITV News at Ten*. He has two children and writes regularly about internet safety issues.



NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON.

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



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