



# NEWSLETTER

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

This is always the point in the school year where teachers and parents/carers meet in person to discuss how the children have settled in. Like everything else, the current situation dictates that things have to be completed in a different way this year. Below we have detailed further arrangements. Please check these carefully.

One of the most important parts of the home school relationship is communication and every school strives to get this right for everyone. However, the times we are in mean that we have to adapt and change how this works. Despite careful planning and thought, not everything may work perfectly! Please bear with us!

There will always be other issues that arise in school but please speak to either the staff, Mrs Lowe or myself if you have any queries or concerns, however minor. As we say on every newsletter, please do not wait to contact us because the sooner we know about any issue the quicker we can resolve it.

## PARENTAL CONSULTATIONS

As you are aware we are trying to hold our conversations remotely via phone calls or virtual meetings. Working with technology is bound to bring issues – if something goes wrong and a slot is missed, we will rearrange in some way as soon as we can.

At every Parental Consultation the staff give out a short report that is a record of the child's learning attitudes and behaviours as well as next steps. Due to restrictions, we won't be able to do this at the moment. We will endeavour to do something as soon as we can to replace this.

Also, we cannot practically share work during Zoom meetings. As was mentioned before, as soon as we can we will hold a form of open classroom so you can see the work your child is doing.

In order to manage the equipment, we are staggering which teachers are holding their meetings on which evenings. This means that siblings will have possible different evenings – staff are checking for any potential clashes as well.

During the above meetings, we will be asking all parents/carers to confirm whether or not their children could access 'remote learning' set by our school. Should we enter another full or partial lockdown in the coming weeks work will be set via Google Classrooms

which is an online platform where we can set tasks and monitor pupils' responses.

## PACKED LUNCHES

Some of our KS2 children are bringing in hot options in their packed lunches e.g. pasta or soup in a flask. At the moment, in order to get the children their dinners promptly, arrangements dictate that at times the children are eating in their classrooms, or when the weather is fit they are using the picnic benches which are cleaned before and after use.

Because of this and the fact that we are not always using the Dining Room for all KS2, please could you **only** send in cold items for packed lunches. This is for Health and Safety reasons and also being able to clean the surfaces effectively. We appreciate your co-operation with this.

## NATIONAL ONLINE SAFETY WEBSITE

We are now members of the National Online Safety community; this is a fabulous resource centre to help all parents/carers, staff and children to keep up to date with issues relating to online safety.

As part of this subscription, all parents and carers in our community can sign up to access their wide range of resources and help guides.

To create your account, please follow <http://nationalonlinesafety.com/enrol/richard-wakefield-cofe-vc-primary-school>, complete your details and select "I am a: Parent/Carer" as your account type.

Once you have registered, you will be able to access the "Online Safety for Parents and Carers" course and National Online Safety's Resources - which includes a wide range of online platform guides on the latest social media channels and games. National Online Safety release a brand-new guide weekly, and aim to cover all major social media platforms, apps and issues that children encounter online. This aims to help empower parents with the knowledge to protect their children from the dangers of the internet.

In the past it has always been tricky for parents to attend after-school meetings, this site will allow everyone to access the information at any time of the day. You can have instant access to a huge range of help guides. New guides are released every Wednesday featuring up to date topics (*see image below*)

All National Online Safety advice is empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

## What parents & carers need to know about...

# AMAZON ALEXA

Alexa is an artificial intelligence (AI) software assistant created by Amazon in 2014 through which smartphone, tablet and smart device users can issue voice commands and ask questions in a range of languages by issuing the 'wake' or activation word Alexa. It can be accessed in several ways and is integrated into a growing number of 'smart' products including speakers, phones and clocks. Once viewed as expensive gimmicks, Alexa is now one of the most used voice assistants in the world.

### Privacy concerns

By their nature, AI voice assistants involve the collection of large amounts of data, how this is stored and the uses to which it is put has caused growing concerns. Experts also worry about who has access to voice recordings, with in 2016 the company admitted sometimes included employees of Amazon and its commercial partners. There is also the more general anxiety that internet voice assistants might record private conversations and not just commands or questions.

### Age-inappropriate content

Using Alexa as a speaker to play your favourite songs is one of the most popular uses for the device. However, without any parental controls in place, Alexa won't filter the lyrics or it's possible that children could hear something they shouldn't. Similarly, Alexa isn't always able to identify who or what age the person is who is issuing a voice command so if children ask a question which might not be age-appropriate, the chances are they're likely to get an age-inappropriate answer.

### National Online Safety

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### Insecure devices

The devices and their background services are another worry, which can have software vulnerabilities that make them insecure in complex ways. In 2016, for instance, researchers discovered that the services to which Echo products connect were through potentially allowing hackers to access personal information such as voice conversations. In 2017, researchers were able to directly hack an Amazon Echo to send audio to attackers. Amazon has a great record of fixing security problems when they are discovered but it is never possible to find every problem.

### Changing Tech Relationships

In a 2018 report published by the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, concerns were raised on the disruptive effect that voice assistants and smart speakers, such as Alexa, were having on the way that children interact with technology. From building sentiment and forming relationships which could encourage them to overshare personal details, to a fear of consuming content driven by commercial algorithms and an inability to assess reliability, how Alexa operates could considerably change children's relationship with technology in both the short and long term.

### Check privacy settings

It's possible to delete Alexa's recordings either entirely, or on a per device basis. Alternatively, set up the Alexa account privacy settings for that device to delete recordings after a set period. Details of the recordings made using the Alexa app can be deleted via settings. Additionally, review third-party app settings to turn off the settings that allow Amazon to use voice recordings to improve Amazon services.

### Control voice input

If privacy is paramount, one idea is to locate Echo devices in only one room rather than having several throughout the home. In addition, Alexa can be switched off when it is not needed by the usual means of the microphone on Echo devices between use. Users can tell Alexa to turn off the microphone as an indicator light should appear or an audible tone should sound.

### Set pin code

Amazon account users can order items from the company using a voice command, for example "Alexa, buy some new paper". To prevent a child using or commandeering the account, users can either be disabled or protected with a pin code. It should be noted that this is a suitable PIN however, is not as secure as a typed code.

### Look out for 'Skills' apps

A big appeal of Alexa is that thousands of companies have created apps, which Amazon calls 'skills', that add useful capabilities when interactions with other products or services. These are installed by using Alexa to 'open' play 'start' the skill. For example, a travel app might be installed to check and automate checking train times and hotel bookings. However, it's important to remember that each of these might have a different privacy policy. A cautious approach is to install as few as possible, de-installing ones no longer in use.

### Talk about technology

As more and more homes install voice assistants and smart speakers such as Alexa, it's a good idea to talk to children about safe use of technology. Talk to them about what Alexa can be used for, how useful it can be and how to use it properly. Use it together to begin with and discuss any concerns they might have. Always make sure that children know to never share any personal or sensitive information and that if they need to talk about anything, they should always speak to a trusted adult.

### Meet our expert

John E. Dunn has worked and written for numerous computer and technology magazines since the early 1980s, most recently *Network Computing*, *The Register*, *Forbes.com*, *Technet*, *Computerworld* and *NetSecurity*. He is a specialist in computer cybersecurity and cybercrime and their growing effect on education, young people and the public.

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## REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A reminder please that all Requests for Leave of Absence forms should be signed by both parents/carers, where appropriate, prior to submission. Thank you.

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> October	Tempest Photographers in school to take pupil photographs. Please note that in the current situation, there will be no pre-school family photo groups.
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> November	NHS Nasal Flu Vaccinations for all children, Reception to Year 6. We will shortly receive Consent Forms from the Flu Vaccination Team and these will be distributed to parents/carers at that time.
<h3>HALF TERM</h3> <p>Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October</p>	

## DROP OFF AND PICK UP ARRANGEMENTS

We have always known that our one-way system from Chatsworth Drive was going to come unstuck when the grass became muddy. This weekend we are putting in a gravel path from the gates to the edge of the playground to allow people to stay off the mud. We recognise that this is a quick and cost efficient solution but we haven't got the time or finances to do anything else. We do recognise that this may not be easy for all pushchair users too.

Please help us by staying on the paths and by asking the children not to play with the gravel to ensure that the path is maintained over the coming months.

## OUR MONTHLY VALUE

This month, in Worship, we are exploring the value of Tolerance.

We will help the children understand tolerance means to put up with differences. It means showing respect for the race, religion, age, gender, opinions, and ideologies of other people or groups.



Marie Curie said, "Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less." Tolerance is the key to increasing understanding and decreasing fear in our next generation, our children. Tolerance is acceptance, openness, and respect for differences.